

The Quiver

CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Dec. 1920

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Gertrude Page

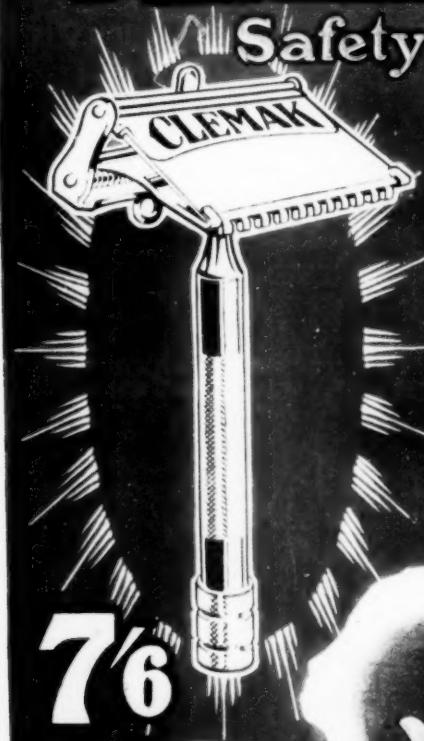
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*The Quiver,
Dec., 1920.*

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"Of course I couldn't," you will reply; "such a thing is impossible."

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Based on an entirely new principle, the Pelman method is simplicity itself, and the very first lesson of the Course will amaze you. There is not a word of English in this lesson, yet you can read it with ease, and you could do so even if you didn't possess the slightest previous knowledge of the language in question. It sounds almost incredible, but it is perfectly true.

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"**W**hy not try 'Skippers'?" said the Old Salt, with his boisterous laugh although none had seen him sit down, " 'SKIPPERS' are still the cheapest food you can buy, and

If your grocer does not stock send his name and address on a postcard; in return we will send an ideal Children's Nursery Rhyme Book, printed in colours.

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"Skippers" are brisling with good points.

A poor meal is no meal

there is nothing left on the plates when they are served. Have plenty of good bread and butter or margarine to go with them. Of course you won't waste the Olive Oil. With those dainty little silver fish, the children learn to love it."

Before anyone could answer the jolly Old Salt had disappeared. But Mother took his advice, and now "Skippers" make breakfast the best meal of the day.

Keep smiling—there's always
Skippers

1/-
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FOR REMOVING GREASE FROM GAS OVENS, ETC.

Ask your Ironmonger or Gas Company for it.

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If you suffer from pain after meals or any of the other countless miseries which go hand in hand with indigestion, try this simple plan: Take half-a-teaspoonful of Bisurated Magnesia with a sip of water the next time you get an attack of stomach pain—

Hold a watch on the operation

and see how soon the pain goes. Within five minutes by that watch—probably within three minutes—all trace of pain will have disappeared and you will be feeling happy and comfortable! Think of it.....the speed.....the simplicity of the thing! Bisurated Magnesia succeeds in over ninety out of every hundred cases; it does so because it neutralises and destroys the harmful stomach acid which causes the trouble. Furthermore, it prevents all possibility of food fermentation, thereby enabling the contents of the stomach to remain sweet and bland throughout the whole process of digestion. You can get Bisurated Magnesia from any chemist at 3/- a bottle, or if you prefer tablets, you can obtain it in this form at 1/3 and 2/6 a flask. A guarantee of satisfaction or money back is included with every package, so that you risk nothing by giving Bisurated Magnesia a trial. When purchasing be sure to look for the name "BISMAG, LIMITED" on the package, as this ensures you getting the only genuine and *really* guaranteed kind. Make a note of the name—



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THE QUIVER

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THIS UMBRELLA

photographed before and after repair is an example of what can be done in the Stanworth workshops.

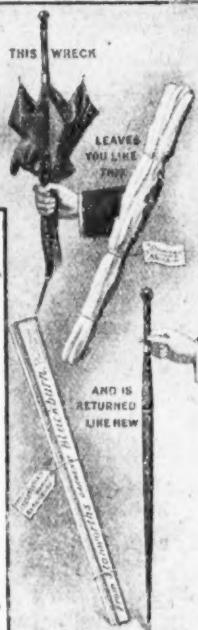
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Send us your old Umbrella

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Mrs. White.

Dr. Cassell's Tablets

The Universal Home Remedy for

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1/3 and 3/-
(the 3/- size being the
more economical).
Sold by Chemists in
all parts of the world.
Ask for Dr. Cassell's
Tablets and refuse
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Neurasthenia
Wasting
Kidney Trouble
Vital Exhaustion

Specially valuable for Nursing Mothers and during the
Critical Periods of Life.

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TAKE TWO TABLETS

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how well you sleep.
Continue, and you
will know the joy of
health and vigour.
Equally suitable for
Children.



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when she
can talk*

she will *express* her praise; even now she does appreciate the comfort of her mother's choice of clothing. The common desire and care of every mother is to adorn her child in the sweetest and softest of fabrics.

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NAINSOOKS, CAMBRICS,
MADAPOLAMS, FINE INDIA
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THE INFANT NEED.

From the cradle stage throughout life, there is always a Horrockses' material for every hour and every need—day wear or night wear.



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Name on Selvedges*

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THE QUIVER

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WRITE FOR DESCRIPTIVE BOOK, FREE.

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THE QUIVER, December, 1920.



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This world-famed Hair Restorer is prepared by the great Hair Specialists, J. PEPPER & CO., LTD., 12 Bedford Laboratories, London, S.E.1., and can be obtained direct from them by post or from any chemists and stores throughout the world.

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This famous lotion quickly removes Skin Eruptions, ensuring a clear complexion. The slightest rash, faintest spot, irritable pimples, disfiguring blotches, obstinate eczema, disappear by applying SULPHOLINE, which renders the skin spotless, soft, clear, supple, comfortable. For 42 years it has been the remedy for

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Redness
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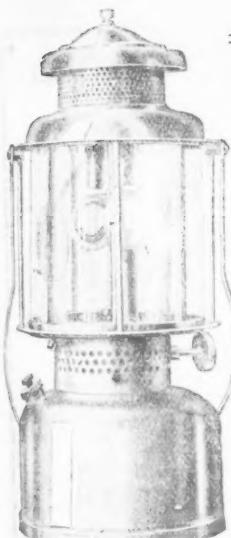
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For cleaning Silver, Electro Plate &
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Sold everywhere 6d 1/- 2/6 & 4/6

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A Quick-Lite Lamp is just the gift that will give the final touch of happiness and good cheer at the Christmas season.

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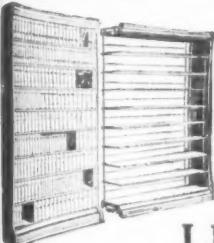
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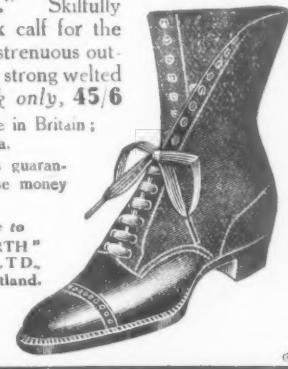
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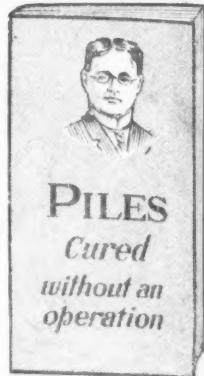
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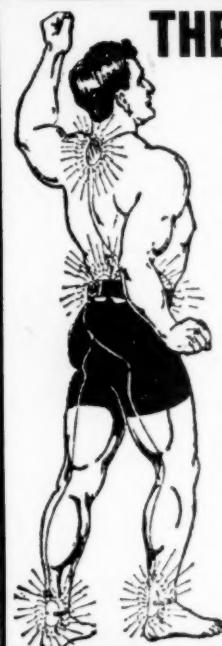
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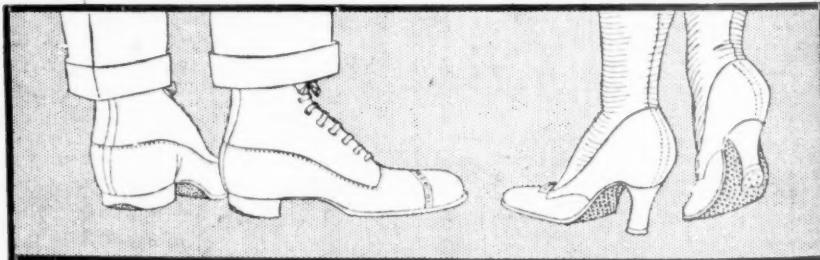
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HELP!

*An Urgent Personal Appeal to Every
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THE TERRIBLE CRY OF MILLIONS OF HELPLESS CHILDREN STARVING IN EUROPE

A DESPERATE appeal—the outcome of the most terrible calamity in human history—is to day made personally to every reader of THE QUIVER.

To thousands of helpless, innocent child-victims of Famine and Plague in Europe *your* practical sympathy means Life—*your* indecision or inaction means Death.

While we live our lives preoccupied with thoughts of pleasure, with money-making schemes, with gossip and chatter, a ghastly cry is resounding from the Famine Areas of Europe.

It is a Terrible Cry of suffering and terror that calls for the immediate response of every true Briton.

And accordingly as you say "Yea" or "Nay," so is food provided or withheld.

This is no call from a slow-moving "philanthropy" or Benevolent Fund.

It is a terrible cry for help, wrung from starving MILLIONS in our own continent.

It is URGENT—an answer is IMPERATIVE.

If you can save even one hour in the posting of your contribution, this short time may yet prove to be the difference between Life and Death—between Health and total physical ruin for the pathetic little sufferer for whom you will surely open the storehouse of your generous compassion.

Think of it! There is no food at all in countless houses in the Famine Area.

Even coarse roots and grasses have been devoured in the hour of extremity.

The ghastly tales of horror and suffering endured by tiny mites of children are too awful to print.

Few would believe the shuddering truth. But the workers on the spot—the ceaselessly toiling Relief Workers who look to the Save the Children Fund for support—know it all too well—the peril of the hour, and the dire need for instant help.

The SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND is bound by no red tape or ponderous Officialdom.

It is an eager, human organisation, efficiently managed, and desperately anxious that every half-penny contributed shall do its share in holding back the terrible hand of Starvation in Europe.

Despite all the magnificent efforts already made—despite all the noble sacrifices—and despite the most generous response on the part of the public to the appeals already issued, children in their thousands are still in danger of Terrible Deaths from Starvation in the famine areas of Europe.

To-day, therefore, a great call rings throughout the country.

A moving appeal to British men and women, each to adopt one of the imperilled children in the famine areas.

You surely can do something. You can send a contribution of some kind. So please do this and at once, to avert the death scene for which the stage is already set.

Write to-day to Lord Weardale, Chairman of Committee, Save the Children Fund, Room 442, 26 Golden Square, Regent Street, London, W.1, sending whatever contribution you can for immediate relief.



Here is a poor little stunted child from the Famine Area, with indelible marks of suffering so stamped upon its face that brings tears to the eye to look upon it. Voluntary help, such as YOU are asked to give, has snatched it from the jaws of death. There are MILLIONS MORE to rescue, and only your swift response can save them.



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The Editor's Announcement Page

THE RE-UNION OF THE CHURCHES

Is it possible to have one single, united, indivisible Church? The appeal issued by the Lambeth Conference a few months ago is now being considered by the different denominational bodies, and the possibilities are stupendous.

Is a "single united Church" desirable? There are aspects of the question that need to be thoughtfully studied. The whole subject is being dealt with in an article in my January issue:

"THE CALL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY: IS RE-UNION DESIRABLE?"

Readers' opinions on this and other articles
will be welcomed.

The Editor

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Please mention
"The Quiver"
December, 1929,
when remitting.

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Dr. J. Collis Browne's Chlorodyne

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Beauty Culture

Some Simple Recipes that give Startling Results

By MIMOSA.

Getting Rid of Feminine Moustaches.

TO women who are annoyed by disfiguring downy hair growths a method of permanently eradicating the same will come as a piece of good news. For this purpose pure powdered phenominol may be used. Almost any chemist should be able to supply an ounce of this drug. The recommended treatment is designed not only to remove the disfiguring growth instantly, leaving no trace, but also to actually kill the hair roots without irritating the skin.

How to have Thick and Pretty Hair.

SOAPS and artificial shampoos ruin many beautiful heads of hair. Few people know that a teaspoonful of good stallax dissolved in a cup of hot water has a natural affinity for the hair and makes the most delightful shampoo imaginable. It leaves the hair brilliant, soft and wavy, cleanses the scalp completely and greatly stimulates the hair growth. The only drawback is that stallax seems rather expensive. It comes to the chemist only in sealed 1-lb. packages, which retail at half-a-crown. However, as this is sufficient for twenty-five or thirty shampoos, it really works out very cheaply in the end.

Blackheads, Oily Pores, &c.

THE new sparkling face-bath treatment rids the skin of blackheads, oiliness and enlarged pores almost instantly. It is perfectly harmless, pleasant and immediately effective. All you have to do is to drop a stymol tablet, obtained from the chemist's, in a glass of hot water, and after the resulting effervescence has subsided, dab the affected portions of the face freely with the liquid. When you dry the face you will



find that the blackheads come right off on the towel, the large pores contract and efface themselves naturally and the greasiness is all gone, leaving the skin smooth, soft and cool. This treatment should be repeated a few times at intervals of several days in order to make sure that the result shall be permanent.

Grey Hair Unnecessary.

ONE need not resort to the very questionable expedient of hair dye in order not to have grey hair. The grey hair can easily be changed back to a natural colour in a few days' time merely by the application of a simple, old-fashioned and perfectly harmless home-made lotion. Procure from your chemist two ounces of tannamile concentrate and mix it with three ounces of bay rum. Apply this to the hair a few times with a small sponge and you will soon have the pleasure of seeing your grey hair gradually darkening to the desired shade. The lotion is pleasant, not sticky or greasy, and does not injure the hair in any way.

How to Discard an Unsightly Complexion.

HOW many women exclaim as they behold their ugly complexion in the mirror, "If I could only tear off this old skin!" and, do you know, it is now possible to do that very thing? Not to actually remove the entire skin all of a sudden: that would be too heroic a method, and painful too, I imagine. The worn-out cuticle comes off in such tiny particles, and so gradually—requiring about ten days to complete the transformation—it doesn't hurt a bit. Day by day the beautiful complexion underneath comes forth. Marvellous! No matter how muddy, rough, blotchy, or aged your complexion, you can surely discard it by this simple process. Just get some ordinary mercerized wax at your chemist's, apply nightly like cold cream, washing it off in the mornings.





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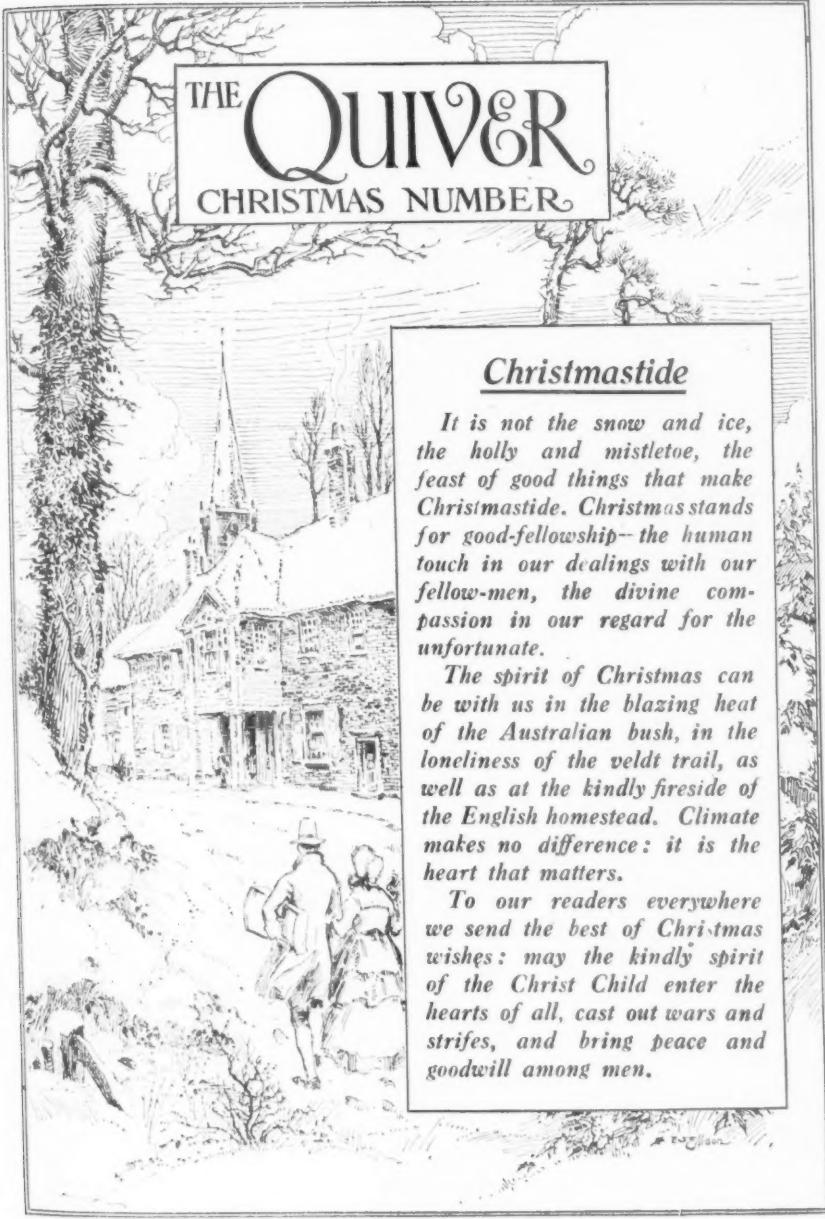
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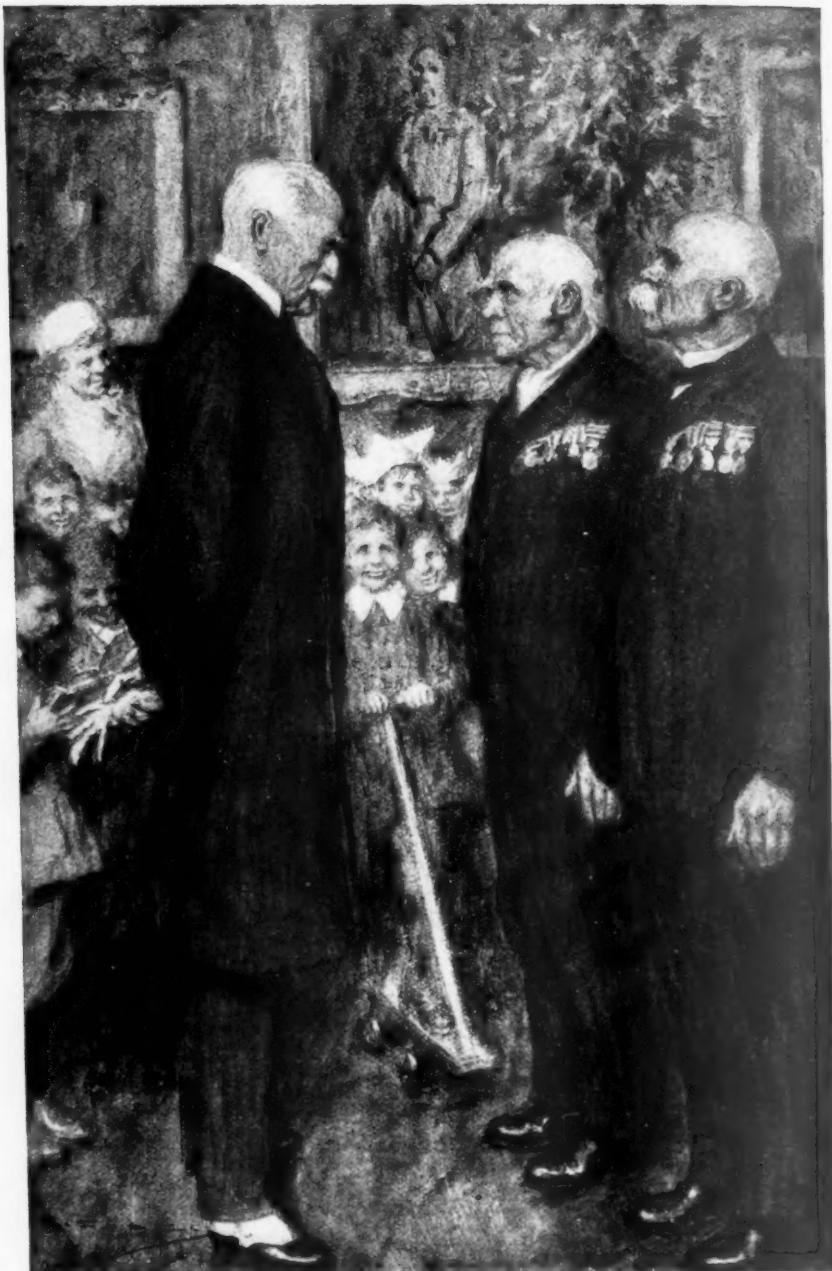
CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Christmastide

It is not the snow and ice, the holly and mistletoe, the feast of good things that make Christmastide. Christmas stands for good-fellowship-- the human touch in our dealings with our fellow-men, the divine compassion in our regard for the unfortunate.

The spirit of Christmas can be with us in the blazing heat of the Australian bush, in the loneliness of the veldt trail, as well as at the kindly fireside of the English homestead. Climate makes no difference: it is the heart that matters.

To our readers everywhere we send the best of Christmas wishes: may the kindly spirit of the Christ Child enter the hearts of all, cast out wars and strifes, and bring peace and goodwill among men.



"He eyed them furiously under
beetling brows"—p. 100

Drawn by
A. C. Michael

Gifts Most Rare

A Christmas Story
By
Michael Kent

BOMBARDIER TOM SIGGERS, carefully nursing the last spark that lingered amongst the ashes in his pipe, inspected with pride the squadrons of his beans. "Drop o' thunder water we 'ad last night do bring 'em on, Fred," he said.

"Likewise the way you look arter 'em," returned ex-corporal Fred Baddock, as he finished clumping a pair of soles on the bombardier's gardening boots. "Reckon there ain't much you don't know about greenstuff." He turned up his handiwork for inspection. "All ship-shape an' army fashion, Tom."

The ex-bombardier regarded him with wonder. "It passes me 'ow you do it," he said, crooning with delight as an old man will. "Proper masterpiece you are with your 'ands, Fred."

His companion nodded sagely as he shaved a bit of twist to fill his clay. "Knack," said he. "You 'as to be born with it. But then I could never grow termaters." He rose stiffly from the wooden settle where they sat. "If I'm a-going to rub your ankle to-night, we'd best get in, mate," he said.

"You bin weedin'. Don't know as I want to be rubbed to-night, Fred. It don't 'urt so bad to-day."

"Orders," returned Fred with vigour. "I weren't orderly at No. 8 'Ospital, Shorncliffe, for nothing. Doctor's orders, an' as such to be obeyed."

He hustled his old comrade into the kitchen and got to work baring the bombardier's gnarled and scraggy ankle. "The proper sort o' stuff this, Tom; used it on 'orses, I 'ave, for sixty year." He slapped a jet from the bottle into his palms and began to rub with an *obbligato* of cheery, grumbling comment. "What's good enough for 'orses an' mules is good enough for an old sojer, an' you're a proper old sojer, Tom, eh? Swingin' the lead, so's you don't weed the reverend's onion bed to-morrow, eh? I don't think. I'll 'ave a pound o' termaters out o' you for this! I'll 'ave—Criminy, there's a knock at the door."

They waited a moment, alert and silent. "Reckon it's some lettuces," said Tom. The knock was repeated.

"Anyways, I'd better go," returned Fred, and, with the bottle of liniment in his hand, walked down the passage cloaked in an atmosphere of turpentine.

Outside stood a young man in the drab uniform of a motor cyclist, and in a side car at the kerb there sat a small boy of eight.

"Mr. Siggers in?" asked the visitor, removing his goggles.

"Ah!" returned Fred, "you want some groceries."

"No, I don't," the visitor smiled amiably. "I've just come from Gatham, and I want to see Mr. Siggers."

"The bombardier," explained Fred, "as got 'is boots off."

"Never mind that."

Fred regarded the nose of the liniment bottle.

"Well," he said at last, "I don't see no 'arm in the legs of an old sojer," and stood aside.

The visitor lifted the child from the car. "Come along, Rupert," he cried, "we're going to see your great-grandad," and the three passed to the bare kitchen where Tom, with his foot upon a chair, awaited the return of his brother-in-arms.

"Grandfather," said the stranger, "I'm Bob Cartwright."

"Cripes!" cried Tom. "Little Susan's 'usband."

"Little Susan's son," corrected Bob. "Your daughter, my mother, has been dead this ten year."

"Law, yes, o' course she 'as, o' course she 'as." The old man chuckled. "Fancy little Susan 'avin' a big feller like you!"

"And a grandson as well," continued the visitor. "Here, Rupert, come and shake hands with your great-grandfather. There's not many that can say they've done that."

Wide-eyed and wondering, the boy placed his palm in the twisted fist. "Are you a hundred?" he piped. "Daddy said you used to be a soldier."

THE QUIVER

"A hundred!" grinned old Tom. "Did ye 'ear 'im, Fred? A 'undred, the young rip! Not yet, my lad; but I'm one of 'Er Majesty's bad bargains, I am. Thirty years' service an' thirty-six years' pension. Shake 'ands with the corporal, sonny."

Rupert shook hands with blushing Fred. "I've got a helmet at home," said he. "Were you a soldier too?"

"Twenty-eighth King's Own, the Jam-pinchers," said Fred, springing to attention.

Bob Cartwright, wrestling with the hidden buttons of his cycling jacket, produced a pound of tobacco. "There's a pipe or two of mixture, Grandfather. I thought you'd fancy it."

Tom took it up, fondling it. "Criminy! That's better than cut cavendish, Fred."

"I'm going to be a soldier," announced the boy. "I can drill."

He stood up stiffly, and the two old men leaned forward, hands on knees, watching him.

"Quick march!" he cried, and stamped up the passage. "Halt!"

"E'll make a gunner, I'll be bound," said Tom.

"Or a trooper," put in Fred.

"A gunner like his great-grandfather," agreed Bob genially.

"Me and 'im being, as the saying is, comrades this forty year, ain't I, so to speak, grand-uncle?" protested Fred, and roared up the passage, "Squad! Right about turn!"

The child came back. "What is 'right about turn'?" he asked.

His father laughed. "Sharp, ain't he?" he said. "He had you there."

"Ad 'im?" asked Tom. "Fred's done thirty years' service."

"Times change," replied the young man. "They've knocked out the 'right' now; it's 'about turn'."

Tom frowned. "Reckon the army ain't what it was, Fred," he said querulously, but brightened in a moment with childish anticipation. "Law," he said, "we 'aven't shown 'im the 'ouse. Gimme my boots, Fred, an' we'll show my grandson the 'ouse."

They were as house-proud as a couple two days back from the honeymoon. Bob Cartwright had to admire not only the military precision of squared mattresses and glinting crockery on scoured shelves, but the many inventions of the corporal, the sliding shutter to the coal-box, which gave out one scuttleful at a time, the whistle that fitted

the kettle spout, the rubber extension to the tap which brought water upstairs.

When the corporal's inventions had been inspected Fred would hasten to act as showman of the bombardier's arts. The office asked a dignified monotone as of a ritual, "Section drorin' of canister shell made for X Battery by Bombardier Siggers, an' exhibited in the sergeants' mess at Delhi. Hobserve corre' scale attached. Don't smoke shag to-day, Tom. 'Ave some of the mixture. Section drorin' of wooden time-fuse, now hobolute, also from the sergeants' mess at Delhi. Ain't 'e a marble?"

The walls of the sitting-room were decorated entirely with the bombardier's handiwork, mainly the machinery of destruction, varied by portraits of officers in household enamel.

"Picshur of the Honourable Gilroy Far-qu-har-son"—the corporal did full justice to the syllables. "Painted by the bombardier from memory at Pindi."

"Umballa, Fred. When we lay at Umballa along o' the King's Own. I 'ad a touch o' sun when I painted that."

"Pardon, Tom, Umballa." And off they would go in memory to lost cantonments, far off and long ago, bazaars, cholera camps, route marches and scraps with fierce tribes among the hills, till Tom came back to draw attention to the corporal's "muddle of the Mut'ny Well made o' putty." Or his "Queen Victoria," encircled with Union Jacks and regarding with severe disapproval a crown about the size of a wedding cake. "Worked by the corporal when 'e lay sick in 'ospital at Shorncliffe, hall worked with 'is own 'ands in Berlin wool on the back of a poultice bag."

Rupert, who had passed the alabaster Taj Mahal, was spellbound by an example of the corporal's magic, a full-rigged ship inside a medicine bottle. "I think you're awful clever, Mr. Fred."

The corporal was delighted. "I'll make you one, if you like, sonny, when I've time."

"Oo-o-h!" There was no doubt that Rupert would like. "Will dad come and fetch it?"

"You tell me where you live an' I'll send it."

"Rosemount - Silverdale - Road - Gatham," said Rupert all in one breath, and the corporal took careful note of it with a stubby pencil on the edge of the newspaper.

"Well," said Bob Cartwright as the tour finished, "we'll have to make a move. Due



"March, you cripples, march!"
he roared"—p. 101

Drawn by
A. C. Michael

THE QUIVER

to meet Mrs. Cartwright in Kingsgate. But I couldn't pass Bishopstone without looking you up, Grandfather."

"You're kindly welcome," said the old man, "any time you pass; an' if your lady'd fancy a pound of termaters I'll just trot up an' cut 'em fresh."

As the cycle sped along the level into Wickford and over the hills to the sea, the two old men stood side by side on the kerb. "Susan's boy 'as got a boy," said Tom, chuckling. "Well, I never! Fine up standin' young sprig too."

"E didn't 'alf take to my bottle," returned the corporal proudly. "Ain't 'e a rip?"

Bob Cartwright, arriving half an hour behind time at Kingsgate, had to explain to the O.C. garrison. "It passes me," said Mrs. Cartwright, "why you trouble to ferret out a common old soldier like that. Remember that you're the leading draper in Gatham, and you may be asked to stand for the town council. You've no sense of what's proper, Robert."

II

THE two old men did not forget their callers, for visitors were few at Artillery Cottages, and in a short half-hour the bright-faced slip of a boy had built for himself a tradition—"The young rip!"

The corporal's commission kept it alive, for he gave onerous hours to its execution. But hands which had been strong and cunning forty years ago had paid their toll to Time, and eyes which had guided him through wild work in distant desert lands, were tired.

The bombardier grew a trifle jealous, but loyally he served in their partnership, reading aloud the news, mainly the crude drama of crime, while Fred whittled perilously at his shipbuilding.

"Reckon it'll 'ardly be done come Christmas," grumbled the corporal as his uncertain knife wrecked for the sixth time a promising start.

"Christmas," returned old Tom. "Crumbs! We might give the young rapsallion somethink for Christmas, like. Save up an' buy 'im one of these scooters, eh?"

Fred was a little dismayed. "Reckon 'e'll like somethink what's made with your own 'ands like, mate," he countered, and fell earnestly to work on the good ship "Jampincher."

"Don't make nothink with my 'ands," grumbled Tom shortly. "Can't send 'im a termater."

But out of wistful, friendly rivalry grew a scheme. It meant scraping, for there was little superfluity in their bare life, but it was a great scheme—no less than a journey westward on Christmas Day to bring their treasures to the child, as other old men had journeyed long ago to lay their gifts most rare before the Babe of Bethlehem.

It held them through the twelve weeks of shortening days. "Reckon 'is eyes won't 'alf jump when 'e sees us, eh, Tom?" "Start right out of 'is 'ead, Fred, that's what they'll do."

It made the sacrifice of scant pipes and supper beer, the sacrifice of time that might have been rest for their old bones, a sacrament, as they counted the days and counted their little silver won with pain, until they saw the end of their desire.

And what an inspection of kit there was when it came time to strike camp and get to the road. The pen can suggest bright boots and age-old hoarded Sunday black, the row of polished "buttons" with historic ribbon on the breast and the jaunty sprig of berries in the hat-band, but it fails at the bright flame of simple wholesome kindness in their hearts. Such as, blind to that, can only see two childish old men with worn dress and uncouth speech, may get no clearer sight except by virtue of One who long ago made clay and anointed darkened eyes and bade go and wash in the Pool of Siloam.

Gatham is a place of little ease wedged between high chalk and tide-washed mud. The mists lie about it veiling the grey ships that lift their questing guns morosely to a leaden sky, and in the narrow streets stalks gaunt improvidence that keeps pace ever with the gallantry of soldiering.

But Bombardier Tom and Corporal Fred were not concerned with these things, though for old acquaintance they would stop to nod at shrouded cannon at the corners of neat barrack squares, or, with bent shoulders, a little square from old habit, greet with raised hand the young sentries who carried the insignia of old battalions.

Their course lay in peaceful avenues, up the hill to a street of new red brick and wooden balconies. Christmas trains are slow and few, and their forced march, which had been planned as a surprise, brought them at about one-thirty to Rosemount.

GIFTS MOST RARE

"polish kit for inspection, Tom," said Fred. "Ow's my boots?"

"O.K., comrade. Take a walk round me before we 'ad over."

Final approval having been mutually given they drew up in the porch. Each held his brown oak crook at the slope. Tom's left hand held the scooter, and Fred, the bottled brig being stowed in a side pocket, a nosegay of late chrysanthemums and a rose or two. He had some difficulty in ringing the bell.

The door was opened with suspicious celerity by a maid, and one might have caught a glimpse of violet satin round the corner of the dining-room door.

For a second the maid stared at them blankly, then, "Oh!" she gasped, "you're not His Worship the Mayor!"

"No," said Fred, "we've brought somethink for Master Rupert Cartwright."

The slip of violet satin developed rapidly into a sharp-faced woman who seemed mainly composed of agitation and opulence. "What!" she cried. "You have no business to come here. Go to the side door. You mustn't come here at this time of day, anyhow."

Craning forward, she could see a little up the road. A light grey car was coming along the avenue, and it moved her to hysteria.

"Go away at once," she cried. "Here comes His Worship the Mayor to dinner!"

The two old men regarded her abjectly. Their minds moved slowly, and this reception, the exact opposite of all that they had pictured with simple faith through three dark months, stunned them.

"My great-grandson," mumbled Tom. "I just thought—"

"Yes, my good man," broke in Mrs. Cartwright in an agony of apprehension, "I understand. Go along that little path to the servants' entrance. You will find your relations there. Tell them to give you a glass of beer."

She had just time to hustle them under cover in broken and disorderly rout and return to greet her guest. "Welcome to Rosemount, Your Worship, and the compliments of this season of goodwill to all!" Mrs. Cartwright had rather a poetic fancy.

Halfway down the mossy cinder path that led to the road Fred took his comrade's arm. "Steady," he said. "Steady, the Buffs!"

Tom looked up at him with a curious

numb, helpless appeal. "I reckon she don't want us," he said.

Together they stumbled on down the road, each seeking to support the other against this repulse. "Never you mind, mate," started Fred. "That young Rupert, 'e never see us. 'E wouldn't 'alf 'ave stared if 'e 'ad."

They both gasped a little as if from recent immersion in cold water, and they tottered forlornly along, miserably trailing their pilgrim offerings. Every now and then one would stretch out a hand to touch the other with a word of consolation. "Steady, corporal! Steady, the Buffs! We 'ad worse times in Abyssinia."

Of course they were very foolish old men, but their lives were very bare, and this visit had been a beacon which had lighted them through three long months along the dark chasm which leads to the abyss.

Without conscious intention they retook their way to the station through bare and dirty streets.

"Me and my mate," explained Tom at the gate, "we're goin' 'ome to Bishopstone."

"Six-fifteen," snapped the porter. "And there's another one arter ten."

"Matter o' fower hours, Tom," said Fred, sitting down upon a platform bench. "Seems like I'm gettin' old."

A quarter of an hour drove them, pinched and blue, to the waiting-room fire, and the glow lifted the paralysis that had settled on their brains.

"What we want," said Fred, "you an' me, Tom, is somethink to heat." He tried to recall his old humorous grin. "Victuals," he said. "Commissariat. Special fatigue for foraging, Tom." He laughed. "Member the March on Jamrud, Tom? Short rations, eh?"

"Ah," said the bombardier. "But it weren't so plaguey cold."

"Come to the cook'-ouse door, mate," urged Fred. "That's the ticket."

They found a grimy eating house and fed sombrely among an alien crew, Lascar stokers and other waifs, and a little after three, from very sickness of their quarters, got to stiff legs again and into the street.

"Three more hours," said Fred cheerfully, "train's a-coming, Tom."

"Ah," returned Tom with a responsive grin. "Long time since you an' me went by train. We do get about for a couple of old sojers, Fred! We 'ad to save up, but we 'ave got about this Christmas."

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Gallantly salving one another's sorrow thus with courageous childish wiles they wandered towards the military quarter, attracted by a trumpet calling "stables," and chanced on a big red brick building with gates guarded by Crimean "cannon. They paused at the old pieces of ordnance and spelled out the inscription above the door : "Orphanage for children of soldiers and sailors killed in His Majesty's service," jibbing at "orphanage," but familiar with "majesty."

"I reckon," said Tom, "they'll be sojers' nippers."

"Ah!" said Fred.

"An' Christmas Day an' all," said Tom.

"So it is, mate."

"We don't want to take no liberties, Fred, but s'pose we—"

"Ring the bell," completed Fred, and rang it.

"You done it now, my lad," chuckled the bombardier. "Prepare to receive cavalry! P'raps we'd best 'a' gone to a *side* door."

Whether their mode of attack should have been flank or front they were now committed to the issue, for a spry young warrior of sixty, with the Khedive's star and the South African buttons, appeared.

"Cemetary gates first on the right," he said with an eye on the corporal's chrysanthemums.

"We don't want no cemetary," said Fred. "If so be we might see the sojers' nippers—"

"Oh!" the doorkeeper admonished himself, "Aszherw," turned about in three movements and disappeared through a green baize door.

He was back in a moment with a pleasant grey woman in slate and scarlet. "I am matron," said she with a smile, and scanned the old men's records, in gold and blue and purple, on their breasts. "The Mutiny!" she cried. "Were you at Lucknow?"

"Tom were," said Fred, pushing his old friend forward.

"So was I," she said. "I was born there. What can a woman say to thank you?"

Tom's scooter fell unheeded to the ground and his crooked hand went to his hat brim. "No thanks, ma'am," said he. "It's a lifetime past. 'Er Majesty 'as paid me well. One-an'-twopence a day for thirty-six years, ma'am."

"Dear, dear," said she with tact, "you look younger," and reverted to business. "You wish to see some of my charges?"

"The corporal, ma'am," said Tom, "'e's got a ship in a bottle, an' we thought, bein' Christmas an' all, we said to ourselves, 'Maybe these young jackanapes 'ud fancy it, like, made by an old sojer.'"

"Of the Jampinchers, ma'am," said Fred, "not to mention the bombardier's scooter."

Out of confusion the matron grasped the one familiar name.

"The Jampinchers!" she cried. "My father commanded them. Oh, come in, come in!"

In half an hour Tom and Fred were in the great hall. Fred, acting instructor to a squad of ten, was grounding them deplorably in an arm drill obsolete a generation ago, and Tom was telling tales of great deeds done by men long dead to kids who bore their names with pride. Up and down the room the scooter raced and the bottled brigantine was handed reverently round. And now Tom would call down the hall to Fred, "Corporal, 'ere's the sister's grandson o' Bill 'icks o' the tenth," and later Fred would answer back, "I say, Tom, this young rascallion was born at Delhi! Lawsy, what a Christmas it is!"

On that disorderly scene, when dark had fallen, there entered the Chairman of the Governors, the Right Honourable the Viscount Waterfield. "Hey?" said he, blinking round sharply at the matron. "Hey? What the d——! That's a rum sort of orphan!"

She explained as much as she had been able to gather of the old men's story.

"Grrumph!" rumbled his lordship in his old parade manner. "Veterans to the front. Grrumph!"

Up stumped the two, as straight of back as fourscore years allowed. He eyed them furiously under beetling brows.

"Grrumph! Mutiny, Abyssinia, Kabul, Long Service, Grrumph! Proud to shake hands with you."

He did. "Rank? Grrumph!"

"Bombardier, sir."

"Corporal, sir. The King's Own."

"And a d—— fine corps too," said his lordship. "Where d'you live?"

"Bishopstone, sir," said Tom.

"And you, corporal?"

"Being, so to speak, comrades, me an' 'im, we kip together, sir."

"You do, do you?" returned Waterfield.

"Well, I'll see you again, see you again. I've got my rounds—hospital, kitchens. Grrumph! when do you go back?"

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Tom peered at the clock. "Law, Fred," he said, "it's ten past six. We lost our train!"

"A little after ten, sir." The corporal rose to the occasion.

"Gad!" said his lordship, "you won't be home by midnight," and abruptly wheeled away.

His tour and a tactful word from the matron kept the two old men in his mind, for in the hospital he found the bombardier's flowers and two unfortunates playing with soldier men fashioned by the corporal's cunning fingers out of match sticks and cork. Their stay had been but a couple of hours, but it had brought them back into a life which they knew well, and the volume of their staunch and simple kindness had filled that house.

Waterfield called them up again on his return. "Look here," he barked, "you can't go home to-night. Stay here and help me keep these brats quiet, then come home and have a bite with me. Lonely old man—no Christmas—charity to do it. Grrumph!" His lordship's self-pity was deplorable. "You won't back out and let me down? Put you up to-night. Drive you home to-morrow. Hey?"

"Oh, sir," cried Fred, "we dassent."

"Gad!" said he, "I'll have you in clink if you don't. Chokey, you bandy-legged pig-sticker. Carry on with the crackers. Grrumph!"

His lordship's method of keeping the brats quiet was to scramble new sixpences, toys and paper crackers. It was about as calm as an air raid in a thunderstorm with a dog show next door.

At seven o'clock his lordship's car arrived,

and after the children had solemnly shaken hands with nobility they pressed to the doors. "Good night, bombardier. Good night, corporal. Merry Christmas all!"

Now just when Lord Waterfield emerged with his guests, the Mayor of Gatham, who had been taking his host and hostess for a spin, came up the narrow lane. Waterfield was well enough known in Gatham to make even municipal dignity curious, and the grey car slowed. The chauffeur stood waiting at the door of his lordship's motor, and on the top of the steps the doorkeeper saluted as the party came down. The steps were well lighted. His lordship had his right hand under Tom's armpit and his left on Fred's elbow. "March, you cripples, march!" he roared. "Come and show me how an old soldier serves his rations."

Mrs. Cartwright had a good memory for faces, and she was very thoughtful as she drove home.



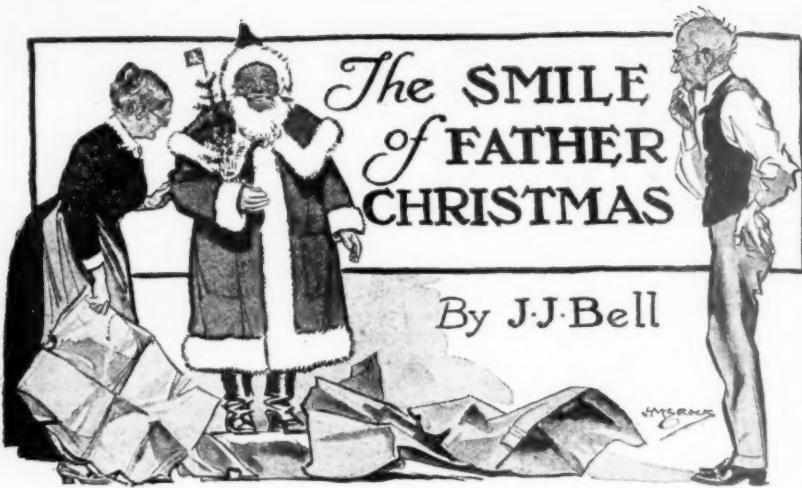
At Waterfield House three old men, with whom long service in noble causes and many hardships simply borne had shattered the barriers of caste, strayed deep in talk that conjured back the East and perilous quests in days when they were young.

"Gad!" cried his lordship as the clock struck twelve, "barring an hour with the kids I never expected such a Christmastide. You boys have done an old man good."

"If your lordship en'yed it, it's what you deserved, sir," said Tom a little troubled, "Me and Fred, we're pore. We ain't done nothink to 'arn it, and, Lawsy, what a time we've 'ad!"

"Grrumph!" said his lordship. Heaven knows what he meant.





"DON'T believe it's worth the trouble of lugging him up from the cellar," muttered Mr. Tell, as he set on end the oddly shaped package, almost as big as himself, steadied it with one hand, and with the other proceeded to smooth his rumpled grey hair.

"Come, come, William," said his wife, whose hair also was grey, though in no need of attention, "you know you couldn't leave him down there a night after the tenth of December. Such an old friend he is! Why, we might say that this was his thirty-first birthday!"

She smiled—with an effort, perhaps—and began to undo the faded pink tapes binding the brown paper.

Mr. Tell, giving both hands to the bundle's support, shook his head and sighed. "But for you, Anna, he'd have stopped below this year. It seems a sort of mockery."

"Don't say that, dear. Things are truly bad, but we've no right to despair. Somehow I've got a feeling that something good will happen before the year is out."

"You kind soul! I can't remember a Christmastide when you didn't have that feeling!"

"Well, and here we are, you and I, in good health in spite of all, and our boy spared to us, when so many were taken."

"You speak as if you had forgotten he was a—a cripple, Anna."

"He's so much better than he was a year ago," she answered bravely. "Come,

William, take courage. We've done our very best; we shan't be beaten—nor forgotten."

The shop—a spacious but decidedly old-fashioned place—was closed for the night. The blinds on the two windows were closely drawn, the outer doors bolted. The private ceremony now being enacted was, as has been suggested, anything but a new one. For thirty years, on the night of December the tenth—or ninth if the tenth fell on a Sunday—husband and wife had stood thus, the oddly shaped package between them.

As the tapes were withdrawn the brown paper relaxed with rustlings and faint cracklings, and the odour of camphor came forth. And then, in response to Mrs. Tell's deft manipulation, the coverings fell away and the third character appeared on the scene.

Father Christmas, in all the glory of scarlet cloth, white fur, tinsel, and high shiny boots, stood there, rubicund and smiling, a trifle crumpled, perhaps, but at a first glance none the worse for his fifty weeks' mummy-like confinement in the cellar.

Mrs. Tell plucked out the creases, and with a clean duster gently wiped the jovial visage, inspecting it closely and affectionately.

"As smart as ever," she said at last. "A touch of glue for his left whisker, a brush down, and he'll be ready to take his old place for the morning. I'm real glad to see him again. Aren't you, William?"

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Mr. Tell gave a queer, short laugh. "I never struck anybody in my life," he said, pointing to the open trap-door and then doubling his fist, "but if you weren't here, Anna, I think I should let him have one on the nose that would send him head over heels back to the cellar!"

"William!"

"Sorry, my dear. I just can't stand his smile nowadays. Indeed, it has been a mockery for years. I never used to be superstitious, but upon my word I've sometimes wondered if the thing weren't downright unlucky."

"Don't say that! He's seen so many, many good years in the old place, and I—I believe he'll see many more."

"Well, I wish he would stop grinning till the bad ones are past. You know as well as I do, Anna, that for the last seven years it has been nothing but troubles and dwindling trade—and I see no prospect of a change for the better. The town's altering; no getting away from that. This street isn't what it was; and everybody's going to the new stores. We ought to have taken those premises in King Street, or at least had this place brought up to date; but, of course, we hadn't the money. Everybody will tell you that the town is making great progress. Unfortunately progress crushes as well as raises. However, there's no use in going over all that again."

Mrs. Tell suppressed a sigh. "I know it has been terribly hard for you, William," she said, "and you've never lost your courage—"

"I've lost it now."

"No, you haven't; you're just a bit overtired to-night. I think we should go upstairs now, and leave the rest till the morning."

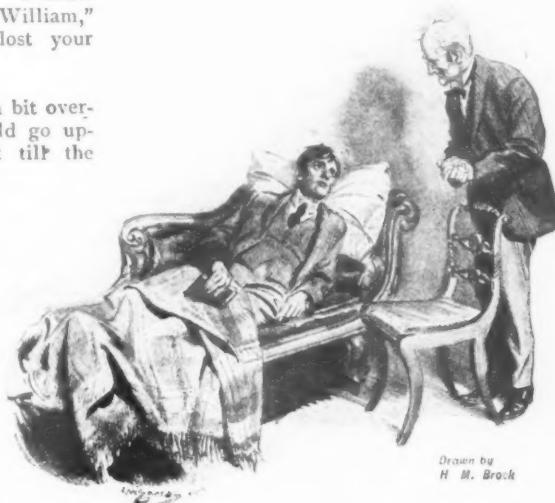
"We may as well put the old thing in its place first, ready to frighten away our few remaining customers. Forgive me, Anna, I didn't mean to be so bitter." He patted her hand supporting Father Christmas, then caught up the festive figure and bore it to its appointed place just inside the glass doors, whence on the morrow its beaming smile would be directed upon the street.

Without a doubt, in the old days, that same smile had drawn in many little customers. Nowadays it seemed that children

were less simple-minded. They could even criticize the attractions of the big stores, which included "real live Santa Clauses" and a host of free entertainments, as well as the most modern and costly toys. Yet not so very long ago Mr. William Tell—whose name, by the way, had been the plague of his schoolboy days: parents can't be too careful—owned the favourite fancy goods shop in town, and at Christmas did a roaring trade. His prosperity reached high-water mark a year or two before the war, but the ebb of business was accompanied by a series of personal misfortunes which would make a story too long and cheerless for the present. Enough to say that he rescued the fortunes of others at the cost of his own, and also gave support to three daughters whose husbands were serving their country.

Neither he nor his wife nourished a solitary regret for the things they had done for those others, nor did they greatly fear for themselves, though an old age of parsimony seemed inevitable. The bitterness lay in the thought, seldom slumbering and as seldom uttered, of all the things they could not do for their only son.

Mrs. Tell, methodically folding up the discarded wrappings, watched her husband as he fixed Father Christmas on to the base intended to represent snow, and for an



Drawn by
H. M. Brock

"Well, father, have you got the old buffer on his perch for another season?"—p. 104

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instant she, too, felt like smashing the gorgeous figure. But now he turned to her with a smile, pathetically brave.

"After all, Anna, there *is* something in the past."

Her lips responded promptly. "Ay, and in the future too, William! Don't let's doubt it. Now come away to your supper."

Mr. Tell laid a friendly enough hand on the figure's shoulder, gave it a shake to test its security—just as he had done thirty years ago, when he and Anna were proud young people—and then, having let down the trap-door and glanced around him, joined his wife at the foot of the narrow stair.

"I don't suppose I *could* have left him in the cellar," he remarked, and pressed her hand.

"I'm sure you couldn't, dear man!"

So they went up, leaving Father Christmass to smile in the dark.

They entered a bright and cosy sitting-room, wherein elegance was secondary to comfort, though there were bits of old furniture that would have caught the eye of a collector. With these Mr. and Mrs. Tell, had theirs been the only feelings to consider, would have parted before now.

The good-looking young man on the couch laid aside his book.

"Well, father, have you got the old buffer on his perch for another season?"

"We have that, my boy." Mr. Tell rubbed his palms together with apparently the heartiest satisfaction. "He wears well."

"Not even getting bald?"

"Hasn't lost a hair, though, to be sure, his left whisker requires a little attention from your mother."

"None of the smile come off?"

"Same as ever, Robert," said Mrs. Tell, busy at the table. "Do you remember how it tickled you when you were a little boy?"

"It tickles me yet. I never saw such an absolutely genial yet self-satisfied smile. Why, it used to haunt me in France—"

"Robert, you never told us that!"

"—at the most unsuitable times, too. Naturally, I was always seeing it at this season."

"Hope it didn't annoy you," said Mr. Tell, stirring the fire.

"Annoy me? Why, it must have done me good—set me laughing when there was certainly very little to laugh at. I'm sure there was more than one chap thought I had gone mad. I remember one night—

Well, I'll tell you another time. Let's have supper, mother, if it's ready." Robert was always afraid of harrowing the old people, and a good many of his reminiscences never got past the beginning.

"Everything's ready, Robert," said Mrs. Tell, who understood. "Come, William." She wheeled the table beside the couch.

Mr. Tell took his place. "I remember when the children used to want their parents to buy them Father Christmas," he remarked lightly. "I wonder what he would fetch to-day. We might put him up to auction, eh?"

"What an idea!" said Robert, laughing. "Only you and mother could never carry it out. You'd feel like criminals, wouldn't you? Or if you did have the hardihood to sell him, you'd be offering anything to get him back five minutes later. Why, he's part of the business—one of the family, indeed! Absurd, but a fact."

"So he is," said the parents together, and for a little while forgot their cares.

It was the week that used to witness the great "rush" of the year, but times had changed indeed. There was, of course, some business doing in the old shop, and Mr. Tell reported it upstairs as "fairly brisk," though he had already realized that this Christmas trading must show the poorest results on record, and that a good deal of the stock purchased so cautiously—too cautiously, perhaps—was bound to be left on his hands. Yet the old man put what he called a good face on it, for Robert, who was not feeling quite so fit, must be spared all things of a depressing nature.

"Gives me the pip," observed the junior assistant at the main toy counter, a girl of seventeen, to her colleague, a woman many years in the service of W. Tell and Co. "Wish I hadn't taken on the job. 'Twould have been cheerier in a fish shop; but I was sure there would be some bustle here at Christmastide."

The other sighed as she proceeded to replace in their boxes three rejected dolls, a tin engine, and a water-pistol.

The junior continued: "Seems to me that no one comes in here except people in a hurry, and people that haven't the legs to carry them to the stores. Nobody but elderlies and people that have to look twice at a shilling! You'd think there were no kids left. There hasn't been one in to-day,

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except that infant that yelled at the sight of the old Father Christmas thing there, and had to be taken out. And as for style, why, if a motor-car stopped at the door I'd simply fall down in a swoon!"

The woman cleared her throat. "Mr. Tell has a good steady business," she said loyally. "He doesn't need to depend, like many shopkeepers, on a great burst at Christmas."

"Well, of course, you know more about it than I do, Miss Main; but I can't think how he can walk about and serve ninepenny customers, smiling all the time, the way he does—unless he's learnt the trick from Father Christmas. See, there he goes to open the door. Ah, I thought so. Nothing doing! Only somebody taking shelter from the rain. What a day! Good thing for us the doors aren't standing wide. I say, Miss Main!"

"Well?"

"Has the old Father Christmas thing been there long?"

"Ever since I can remember, Lucy. It used to be quite a draw for the young people."

"H'm! It would take a blue monkey playing the fiddle to fetch the kids nowadays. Really, this is an old-fashioned place, isn't it?"

"If you don't like it," said Miss Main, controlling her indignation, "you know the remedy."

"Oh, dear, I didn't mean to offend you. I don't suppose I'll stop after the New Year, though I do like Mr. Tell. Still, you know, the prospects— Hooray! here's quite a bunch of people coming in—and to our counter, too! Perhaps we'll get rid of that doll with the broken leg." And Miss Lucy darted to her own place at the counter, gave her hair a pat, and smiled on an old gentleman as sweetly as if she had known him to be a young prince in disguise. Concerning whom, it may be recorded that he bought quite lavishly, and afterwards requested a word with Mr. Tell himself, just to shake hands and remind Mr. Tell that this was his thirtieth Christmas visit to the shop. Which to Mr. Tell was a comforting event in a rather dis-comforting hour.

The days passed. Customers came and went. Now and then there was something like animation in the shop, but Mr. Tell knew how much it was worth to him and his expiring hopes. The customers were



"Wish I hadn't taken on the job," observed the junior assistant at the main toy counter"

not those with the bulging purses and overflowing pockets so much in evidence in many shops that Christmas. The modest purchases might prevent an actual loss on the season's trade, but the profits the man and wife had prayed for, thinking only of that good soldier, their son, were as far away as ever. Meanwhile Father Christmas continued to smile at the street, and not one person in fifty so much as noticed him.

On the night of the twenty-third Mr. Tell was late in coming up to supper. The shop had been closed for some time, but Mrs. Tell assumed that he was working at his books, and gave him half an hour's grace. At the end of that time, remembering how little he had eaten during the day, she stole down the stair—and stopped, petrified, on the last step.

The rear of the shop was in darkness; a solitary light burned near the door. It was enough.

With his back to the glass door, and facing Father Christmas, stood Mr. Tell haggard yet determined of countenance. He was grasping a heavy hammer, and

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even as the woman's eyes fell on him he swung it upwards.

Mrs. Tell opened her mouth—and clapped her hand over it. No! What mischief might not a sudden cry do to the poor distracted man? Let Father Christmas go! And yet—Her hand moved up to cover her eyes, then fell to clasp the other, and her head drooped, so that she stood like a suppliant.

To her ears at last came a sigh; it was followed by the noise of the hammer striking the floor. She dared to look.

Father Christmas was uninjured. Her husband stood motionless, his face in his hands.

Softly—not stealthily—she went towards him. His hands fell; he regarded her like one awakening.

With a wan smile he said: "I couldn't do it, Anna. I don't know why, but I couldn't do it. All day long he has been on my nerves, till I felt I could stand him no longer."

Without a word Mrs. Tell put her arms around her man.

"Foolish of me," he went on; "worse than foolish, for I was going to do it behind your back. And I should have been sorry afterwards. For, after all, what difference can he make one way or another? He's not doing our Robert any harm, anyway. Will you forgive me, Anna?"

She kissed him, weeping. "What was in your heart, dear?" she whispered.

"Bitterness—nothing, I'm afraid, but bitterness."

"Still nothing but bitterness?"

"No, no; it can't be all bitterness with you near. Still, it's hard to bear."

"I know, I know."

"We have kept on hoping so long, Anna, and telling each other that money isn't everything—"

"Well, is it, dear?"

"Isn't it now? We can give our boy our love and our prayers and our labour and all the pain of our hearts; but we can't give him the hundred and one things that might bring him back to health—that would, at least, make his days brighter, his captivity more endurable. Only money can give him—"

"Don't, William!"

"And he's such a good, patient fellow, I—I really think I could steal the money, Anna."

"You could no more do that than you

could kill—I mean break—Father Christmas."

"I could borrow, knowing that I could not repay."

"No, you couldn't, my dear. Come! Say it again—say it as you said it the night before we were married: 'Money isn't everything.'"

"Money isn't everything," he faltered.

"Go on. That wasn't all."

Suddenly he seemed to brace himself. "You are right, Anna," he said firmly. "It won't buy anything from heaven." And he took her in his arms.

Early in the afternoon of Christmas Eve Lucy, the junior assistant, let out a screech that fairly startled Miss Main.

"If that isn't a real motor-car stopping at the door!"

"What a beauty!" murmured Miss Main, who was depressed. "I suppose they want a twopenny Christmas card."

A young man and a girl of perhaps twenty alighted and peeped into the shop. Then the girl clapped her hands, seized the young man's arm and dragged him in—not that he appeared reluctant. For a moment it seemed that the girl was about to break into a dance before Father Christmas, and it was the young man's turn to take charge.

He led her over to the toy counter, and to Lucy, whose countenance was wreathed in smiles.

"Can I see the proprietor?" the young man inquired.

Lucy's face fell. Her vision of an enormous sale grew dim; but she made haste to fetch Mr. Tell.

Said the young man to his companion:

"You didn't give me a chance to look for the name above the shop, Lydia."

"It's Tell and Co."

"Thanks. Now, don't you speak till I give you permission. It's just possible we're on the wrong track, after all. A coincidence—"

"A fiddlestick! I haven't the slightest doubt—"

At this moment the proprietor appeared.

"Mr. Tell?" asked the young man.

Mr. Tell bowed.

"I hope I'm not going to trouble you needlessly," said the young man, "but I should like to ask you a few questions about a matter of great importance to myself."



"Have you a son, Mr. Tell?"
asked the young man"—p. 108

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Mr. Tell, looking a little mystified, signified that he was at the other's service.

"Have you a son, Mr. Tell?"

"I have."

"And was he in France?"

"He was."

The young man drew a long breath; the girl's eyes sparkled.

"Is he at home at present?"

"He is in my house, upstairs—an invalid, I'm sorry to say."

"From wounds?" cried the girl, all concern.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Phil, it must be he!"

"An invalid," murmured the young man, looking distressed. "I wonder— Pardon, but I ought to have given you my name. It is Philip Vantage, and this is my sister." He held out his hand, as did Lydia.

"Then you are a friend of my son's?" said Mr. Tell, somewhat embarrassed.

"I could wish for nothing better. Is it possible that I could see him?"

"Why, yes, I think so. Robert is fairly well to-day. But you will allow me first to take up your name—just to prepare him, you understand?"

"He won't know my name, Mr. Tell. I didn't know his till a moment ago—"

Mr. Tell stared.

"But please ask him whether he remembers his companion in a shell-hole one night, exactly three years ago. His answer will end all doubts."

"I will do so," said Mr. Tell, and departed.

"There are no doubts now," said Lydia in a low voice. "How I long to see my hero!" She glanced about her. "What a queer, old-fashioned place, and what a dear old man! Phil, perhaps there may be something we can do—"

Her brother was lost in thought.

Mr. Tell returned. "Yes, Mr. Vantage, he remembers perfectly, and is eager to see you. And if Miss Vantage will honour us—"

"She will honour herself, Mr. Tell," said Lydia. "For you must please understand that your son saved my brother's life, the only life near to my own."

"He never told us anything about that," stammered the old man.

"Then I will tell you quickly," said Vantage. "On the night I mentioned I was wounded in the foot. Your son came across me and carried me under fire to a shell-hole—a shallow one, but still a refuge of sorts. It was then pitch dark, and for a while we thought ourselves fairly safe. But the light came, and the bullets. Mr. Tell, your son, who did not so much as know my name, made a shield for me—with his own body. I suppose I became unconscious. I did not see your son again. I have been long in finding him. I advertised in vain; but of that more later. Will you please take us to him?"



In the last hour of Christmas Eve, Robert having retired, husband and wife crept down to the shop. As he lit the gas, Mr. Tell said for the twentieth time:

"Anna, I can't get over it! What a lovely thing is gratitude! Think of that brother and sister searching and searching and searching for our boy!"

"And now they're going to load him with benefits! William, you have no feelings against that, have you?" she asked, leading him towards the front.

"None. It seems a just and beautiful thing. I am filled with thankfulness. I have no shame in taking the gift of my boy's health, and we shall persuade him to accept all they wish to give."

"He won't refuse, William; he wouldn't hurt them so. They are so in earnest, those two. I do love them for it. Think of them searching for nearly a year, from the day that Mr. Vantage was free of the Army, with nothing to guide them except that he had guessed Robert belonged to Scotland, and that Robert, lying in that dreadful place, had said something—to explain his sudden fit of laughing—about a shop door with a big, smiling—"

They stopped in their walk, silent, overcome with the wonder of it all. The man's hand groped for and found the woman's.

And Father Christmas stood there smiling at them—and, as it seemed, to himself.



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Christmas Fallacies

*A Few of Them Exposed
By
Sylvia Furlong*

Is Christmas a "humbug"? There are generally two sides to every question, and, with the world rejoicing, we can afford to hear "the other side" dispassionately, even though we may not agree

"CHRISTMAS," said Ebenezer Scrooge, "is a humbug," and created an immortal reputation as a flint-hearted old curmudgeon. Well, it's the fashion to whitewash villains these days, and, while not exactly wishing to glorify one of the misanthropes of fiction, one feels very much inclined to excuse him just this once, and even, privately, to agree with his verdict in moderation. After all, he was brave enough to admit the dark secret that most of us hide guiltily from the world when December begins to loom in the offing.

Fostering Humbug

Was there really ever such a season as Christmas for fostering humbug of a peculiarly grotesque kind? Don't think I'm casting aspersions on the jolly old idea of good fellowship and giving children and people less lucky than ourselves the best time in the world. Only a true sour-heart, who ought to be spanked and put in the corner, could do that.

By "humbug" I mean all the Christmas fallacies that are kept in a box all the year round to be produced every season amid a chorus of suppressed yawns. No one knows exactly who invented them, though accusing looks are cast at novelists, short story writers and people with sentimental ideas about the past, but even they must have got their ideas *somewhere*. And a pitiful set of delusions they are!

The "Christmas Weather" Delusion

Who, for instance, believes in the weather described as "good, old-fashioned Christmas weather"? From a careful study of seasonable illustrations one gathers that Santa Claus always orders a hard frost (warranted to sparkle), pretty, snow-laden landscapes picked out with robins in the

foreground, a decorative snowstorm and red-curtained cottage windows through which the lamps shine cheerily on the white ground outside.

Well, he may *order* them. But if the oldest inhabitant were truthful he would admit that the Clerk of the Weather invariably muddles the command and sends a muggy thaw, a piercing east wind, or something equally unromantic.

But let the weather pass. Snow at Christmas, really nice, white snow picked out tastefully with robins and ruby lights, not to mention holly bushes that positively blaze with scarlet berries, is a pretty fancy and a perfect fallacy.

The Decorations Nuisance

I know lots of worse ones, as schoolboys say when they tell their small sisters creepy stories. Let us go into a house preparing for Christmas—a house which, by the way, should turn automatically into a fine old ancestral mansion, set in spacious grounds, or, alternatively, a peasant's humble cot. Christmas scenes, I know not why, can never, according to popular ideas, be fitly laid in suburban villas or boarding-houses. There seems to be something almost improper about celebrating Yule at Lyndhurst, Station Road, Suburbia, or 48 Derby Mansions. It simply isn't done—at any rate, in fiction!

The idea is that Christmas decorations are put up by the entire family with quips and shouts of merry laughter. Grandpapa is not too old and sour to look on approvingly from the chimney corner (another fallacy, this inviting but mythical spot!), and the youngest child can toddle unsteadily about experimenting as to the effect of holly berries when taken internally. Generally there is a gay house-party, and

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debonair young men with a secret passion for the hostess's pretty daughter find occasion for the furtive pressing of pink fingertips as the damsel helpfully hands up greenery to them on their secure and comfortable perches at the top of the household steps, which never appear to wobble.

How different is the sad reality!

At the last minute but one somebody says, "Oh, I say, we haven't decorated yet!" Little enthusiasm, and what there is, is extinguished by the time-honoured remark of somebody else (if it is a country household) that half the fun of Christmas consists of picking one's own decorations. This cheerful statement is exemplified by the dismal party, which, well-mackintoshed and goloshed, presently sallies out into the rain (it always does rain!) in search of mistletoe which doesn't grow locally (does it grow anywhere, or is it manufactured by artificial flower-makers?), holly which has decided on a ca' canny policy with regard to berries this year, and ivy that is chiefly remarkable for the toughness of its stems and the dampness of its foliage.

Home again, tired, wet, and loaded, to the great business of decorating. That greenery is poked lopsidedly behind pictures or hung insecurely over doors, no one attempts to deny, but that the entire family revels in the proceedings is another flight of fancy. I know at least one father—quite a darling, not a curmudgeon—who may be seen stealing quietly into the library and locking the door, as soon as a pile of thorny foliage appears in his ancestral hall. And helpful damsels with sentimental yearnings are far more likely to have hammers dropped on their toes than to meet Cupid while a-decorating, especially as the young men of the family have a habit of being kept late at the office on holly-hanging day.

The Mistletoe Fraud

As for mistletoe—poor, overworked plant!—certainly it is religiously suspended because "we must have a lot of mistletoe or it won't seem like Christmas," but when does it live up to its exciting reputation, as pictured in highly coloured Christmas plates? If you fondly imagine its waxy white berries as producing romances at the rate of about one a minute all through the Christmas holidays, you will be surprised to find what a sinecure the post of official kiss-sanctioner is for the cherished plant. Kissing goes ever by favour, and not by mistle-

too, even at Yuletide; bashful bachelors may often be observed avoiding the gas bracket throughout an evening with considerable skill; it is no longer (if it ever was) the coy, blushing maiden in white muslin and blue ribbons who is caught so deliciously unawares.

Nor may the occasional mistletoe-gallant, however bold, kiss whom he will with impunity. The maiden who has spurned amorous advances has no more mind to be kissed at Christmas than at any other time, and one girl of my acquaintance rewarded a too persistent admirer who trapped her under the berries in the hall with a smart little slap—in full view of a large and hilarious audience, too!

Christmas Dangers

Altogether, Christmas has its dangers, and not least of them is the family invitation. This, as usual, is fostered by a fallacy: that relatives are seized with overwhelming affection for each other as the old year wanes, and must, at all costs, gather in an immense reunion.

To express a timid wish to spend the day with friends who aren't having a turkey or going to the pantomime, when one possesses a large circle of aunts, uncles, and cousins who are to enjoy both delights, is to be thought a Bolshevik with no natural good feeling.

A certain party of lawless young people did once hide themselves from their respective families to enjoy a Rebels' Christmas with none of the orthodox trimmings, and there was no possible doubt about the enjoyment. But their relatives haven't recovered from the shock to this day. Every December without fail they recall and deplore it.

The Problem of Relatives

The question is—are one's relations more lovable at Christmas than at any other time? Well do I know that in fiction some strange alchemy takes place in their hearts when the bells begin to chime or the carol singers to make night hid—(I mean melodious). Of course we all dote on "When shepherds watched their flocks by night" in pronounced Cockney). Then, if we may believe what we read (and who doesn't hold by the sanctity of the printed word?), uncles cease from domineering and our cousins bore no more.

Stern guardians, grandpas, and god-parents reveal hearts of gold for the first

CHRISTMAS FALLACIES

time in their lives. Young couples, cut off with a shilling and their sugar coupons, have huge cheques presented by repentant sires, and tears flow freely on both sides. Prodigal sons appear from God's own country with rolls of notes on their persons, just in time to kick the bailiff out of the kitchen, and partake of the fatted turkey. Cinderellas are always whisked off to balls by fairy godmothers, and long-lost Princes Charming kiss away all misunderstandings under the mistletoe.

As to the little curly-headed children, they are scandalously overworked bringing estranged parents or lovers together with their artless prattle, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Small Chatterboxes ought to be invoked on their behalf.

Let us look, more in sorrow than in anger, at the other side of the picture. Recall your own past Christmas Eves and Days and count the number of photograph frames (which you never use) and suède-bound "Winnings from Wordsworth" (whom you never could stand) that you have received from your only rich aunt; remember the quarrel you had with the nicest person in the world because someone else kissed you under the mistletoe or the family party wore your nerves to a frazzle (and well it might!).

When the Black Sheep do not Come

Admit honestly that if black sheep ever do turn up with a golden fleece they're just as likely to arrive on April Fools' Day as on December 25. Have you ever known a dream-dress (with accessories to match) to come in a mysterious box at the eleventh hour, just when you were crying over your old blue and silver that would have to "do" again for that extra-special dance? And what of the little children, curly headed or otherwise, who are thoroughly peevish after

too much Christmas fare, and even doubt the existence of Santa Claus?

Finally, lives there the person with digestion so strong that he or she can eat and enjoy unlimited supplies of turkey, plum-pudding, mince-pies, and Christmas cake? One or even two of them you may like, in extreme moderation, but all together in one rich ensemble, *never!* Nine people out of ten toy with a mouthful of plum-pudding for the look of the thing, and then turn thankfully to jelly or a simple trifle. Why else does Christmas pudding, pretending to be fritters, haunt the family table for days afterwards? Why else do mince-pies drag out a languishing existence long after Boxing Day? At Christmas *everything* seems too rich, and dessert that one would have revelled in on, say, May 12, one refuses with a hapless groan at the Yuletide board.

Thank goodness we aren't still expected to eat boar's head. I have heard that those diners who spend Christmas in the mediæval strongholds where it is still served turn faint and lose their monocles at the very thought of eating it.

The Kitchen Ghost

If ghosts ever have walked at Christmas, and no set of fallacies is complete without a good ghost—for preference the sort that, like W. S. Gilbert's, wavers through a key-hole (see also ancestral mansions)—one needn't go far to seek their origin. Obviously they came out of the kitchen with the baked meats, clanked their chains painstakingly in the passage and finally settled with determination on the chests of weary revellers.

By Boxing Day, frightened by cooling draughts and the thought of approaching bills, they retire comfortably to the dear old fallacy box—till next Christmas!

Do You Agree?

Miss Sylvia Furlong has certainly given her point of view clearly. What do my readers think? I shall be glad to award a Prize of One Guinea for the best letter on "Is Christmas a Fraud?" For particulars, see Competition Pages



"Kathleen Hardcastle stared at this astonishing,
round, fair little stranger in silent amazement"

Drawn by
Norah Schlegel

Dot

By
Brenda Elizabeth Spender

FIN HARDCastle alone was to blame for "Mr. Plant's" appearance at the dancing class. Nobody but Fin would have dreamed of asking him, but Fin's optimism, or carelessness, was proverbial, and they happened to meet, at a time when new members were desired, at a gloomy whist drive in aid of the steeple fund of the church Fin's second sister went to—for Swainshill is one of those London suburbs where every member of a family may have his or her own place of worship within easy distance, and the young Hardcastles availed themselves of that privilege to the fullest extent.

"Pretty slow, isn't it?" said Fin with perfect cheerfulness as he dived for refreshments for his party among the viands spread upon a side table. "Mr. Plant," short, plump, pink-cheeked, with ineffective blue eyes behind round glasses, gravely considered the point and looked at his watch.

"I believe we generally do reach the interval about five minutes earlier."

Fin, arrested by his remark, paused to look down at his serious face and grinned at the unintentional jest.

"I don't mean the pace we are playing at, I mean the sort of entertainment altogether. I'm a lot keener on dancing myself."

"It must be a most enjoyable form of exercise," said "Mr. Plant." "I never tried it."

"Then you'd better come and join our class on Tuesdays and learn. I'm getting it up with another chap. What's your name—Pollard? I'll fix it up for you."

Neither long-legged Fin, who was keen on getting new members, nor "Mr. Plant" himself, who made it a point of honour to try to do everything other fellows did, considered whether he was likely to prove a success at a dancing class which was really more an informal weekly dance got up for the benefit of the Hardcastles' set and their friends. Next Tuesday evening at eight he duly limped into the big, brightly-lit room, and Fin, who had forgotten all about him till he saw him, left an absorbing partner for a moment and introduced him to one of his sisters as "Mr. Plant" ("I knew he was some beastly thing that grew," Fin said),

and the name stuck to him ever after, and was made the subject of endless jokes.

The Hardcastle girl looked at Mr. Plant and remarked that it was a warm evening. Mr. Plant earnestly assured her that her opinion was entirely derived from conditions prevailing indoors—in fact, he himself predicted frost before morning. A silence fell between them, the pianist struck up a valse, and the Hardcastle girl excused herself, turning with relief to meet her hurrying partner. Mr. Plant stood neglected, alone by the door, a position that most young men of his age would have found disconcerting, but his simplicity spared him that one form of self-torture. He had been asked there to learn to dance; he therefore ought to try. He beamed around through his glasses and sighted young Mrs. Hardcastle, the widow of Fin's eldest brother Jim, who had died a prisoner of war, lounging in a deep chair at the fireside, watching the whirling throng with the set smile that sometimes made her look so much older than her thirty years. Mr. Plant bowed before her very formally.

"Might I have the pleasure of dancing this with you—at least, trying to?" he said honestly.

Kathleen Hardcastle, the most finished dancer in the room, the one to whom any dispute as to steps was carried for her judgment, stared at this astonishing, round, fair little stranger in silent amazement.

"I am here to learn dancing, you see, so I think I ought to try."

Afterwards young Mrs. Hardcastle, who had assumed a bitter tongue with her mourning and showed no signs of increasing sweetness now that she had abandoned crêpe, said that it was because his staid, stout smallness reminded her of a penguin that she consented to dance with him, and that his steps completed the resemblance.

From that night on the dancing class had no more faithful adherent than Mr. Plant, and the girls who tried in vain to avoid dancing with him, and the men who found his precise and prosy conversation nearly as trying as they found his steps, having rebuked Fin Hardcastle for asking such a person to become a member, relieved their feelings by perpetual jests among them-

THE QUIVER

selves at his expense—the puns are obvious—and, when most exasperated, attempts to snub him which proved quite ineffectual. He had been asked there to join them, to be one of them—this seemed to be his line of reasoning—and even if he did not always understand their laughter the very fact of his presence there was an earnest of their good will. He liked them all; it never occurred to him that they might not reciprocate his feeling; and as to his dancing, the progress he made, insignificant as it was in their expert eyes, was to him a source of endless and naive delight, so that, bringing some dishevelled and breathless partner to a chair, he would call her attention to the delightfulness of the turn round the room together, which had been to her either a humiliation or a joke according to her temperament.

Tuesday evening after Tuesday evening had slipped by, and it was nearly Christmas time when Fin Hardcastle, who seemed fated to play a prominent part in the affair, received one evening an informal call from Mr. Plant's grandmother, whose name, naturally enough, was Mrs. Pollard.

Fin, summoned to his mother's drawing-room in some trepidation, found a fat, pale old lady with mild blue eyes and a parting like her grandson's, which made the likeness ridiculous, seated placidly among the water-colours and silver frames of that apartment.

"My grandson is always talking about you, Mr. Hardcastle." The old lady looked up at tall young Fin, admiring the manly air his boyish, long-legged awkwardness still occasionally contradicted. "You must forgive me for troubling you like this, but I want to give my grandson a surprise, and I thought perhaps you would help me."

Fin, reflecting that the mentality of the Pollard family was as much a transmitted quality as the short sight and the parting, politely expressed his willingness, and thought longingly of the cigarette-case in his waistcoat pocket, expecting to be bored.

Mrs. Pollard beamed, more like her grandson than ever.

"Now, that is very nice of you, and I'll tell you my idea. I'm going to give Arthur a party this Christmas, a dance of his own, a sort of twenty-first birthday party, only it isn't his birthday, and he's twenty-four; only, you see, he couldn't have a real one on account of the war. We've only lived at Swainshill a few months, and he doesn't

know any young people except those he meets at your dances—the Vicar of St. James's and the one churchwarden we know, but they're not exactly young—and the people one meets at whist drives don't seem to make friends in London, do they? You did, of course, with Arthur, but that was very nice of you, and that made me think that perhaps you would give me your opinion about asking the whole of the dancing class to come to Arthur's party. I expect they would like it, don't you?"

Fin stood abashed, trying vainly to think of any polite means by which he could negative the idea. He saw with his mind's eye the mingled annoyance and amusement such an invitation showered broadcast among the members of the dancing class would cause. They all had many invitations and were inclined to be eclectic. He doubted very much whether anyone would accept an invitation from the despised Pollards. He would go himself, of course, because Mrs. Pollard was a dear old thing, and he didn't want to hurt her feelings, and he might persuade one or two of his sisters to come, but even all the Hardcastles, numerous and long-legged family as they were, would not furnish enough guests for such a party. He caught Mrs. Pollard's vaguely anxious eye and mumbled something.

"I was just thinking—about Christmas time people have so many engagements, in fact, all the winter—and in summer there's tennis."

"Oh, don't you think it's possible—just one evening—if we let them know a long while beforehand? Arthur is so grateful for all your kindness, it would give him such pleasure to entertain you. You see, he never has known many young people before. He was very delicate as a boy, and had lessons at home, and then his father died after a long illness, when Arthur had had to be with him a lot, writing for him and so on—his mother died when he was born—and then the war came and he was so unlucky. He was a prisoner in Germany at a terrible camp for years . . . and he's too young for such an experience. I have been so glad to see him with you and your friends, forgetting that time at Kistenhangar a little."

Any mention of those in captivity had for all the young Hardcastles a special significance, since gay, debonair "old Jim," the eldest brother, had languished, sick and wounded, in a German prison camp for

seven dreary months of hope and fear until all uncertainty had been ended by a letter from the War Office for his widow.

"I—I had a brother there too. My eldest brother died a prisoner of war," he spoke with more emotion than he knew.

Mrs. Pollard looked up at him, and her kind eyes clouded, because she saw how this young man's gaiety, like that of half the jolly young people one meets to-day, covered a sorrow that would never quite lose its smart. "Old Jim" would never come back again; life might be for the young Hardcastles a jolly and absorbing affair, but it could never be quite perfect again, because Death had broken the magic home circle.

"Then you know all about it?" said Grandmother Pollard.

Fin nodded.

"I do. If Plant—Pollard, I mean—had the sort of time Jim had it's no wonder he's a bit quaint—I mean it's no wonder he's lonely. He—he wants something to help him forget. Some chaps like me—I was in the Flying Corps for a bit—had a real good time out of it, but the prisoners and some of the chaps who got wounded—He's lame, isn't he? My word, Mrs. Pollard, if you'll give that party, I can promise you that the dancing class will turn up strong. I'll make 'em—tell them, I mean how awfully kind it is of you and that you're going to ask them, and then they won't be surprised, don't you know."

So Fin Hardcastle became responsible for the success of Mr. Plant's birthday party, and finding himself, as he would have phrased it, "up against it," sought the assistance of his sister-in-law.

"He is a queer little chap and a bit of a nuisance, Kath, I know, but, you see, he's been a prisoner—" Young Mrs. Hardcastle's smile changed its quality at the word. "He got taken prisoner early; he's had years of it—we'd be queer in his place—and I should think he had a stuffy sort of life with the old people; and then there's his wound, he still goes lame. It's up to us to give him a good time when we can... he's not a bad sort, you know."

"No, quite a nice—penguin," said Kathleen, but the jibe was only a screen for her sincerity. "We'll do it, Fin. We'll make them come and be nice to him."

Kathleen, like a wise prophetess, set to work to make her own prediction come true. She and Fin between them formed public

opinion in favour of Mr. Plant to such good purpose that when the night of the party came not a member of the club was missing, and not one had come to scoff.

Grandmother Pollard, and presumably Grandfather Pollard—but he wore a skull-cap and was so very vague and so very deaf that no one was quite sure how much he knew about anything—had spared neither pains nor expense over the affair. Arthur, more truly penguin than ever in his first dress suit, limped, beaming, among his guests; the usual pianist had become what Kathleen Hardcastle called "almost a band"; and the wonted "standing up to a sandwich" of such affairs gave place to a real "sit-down supper." Whether from these causes or because of a pleasant sense of self-approbation, everyone enjoyed himself or herself, and no one better than Marjorie, youngest of the Hardcastle family, and that despite the fact that Mr. Plant, sunning himself in her unwanted smiles, seemed to become suddenly aware of the charm of her small, mischievous face with its little pointed chin and wild, bright hair.

It was, of course, inevitable that Mr. Plant should take young Mrs. Hardcastle in to supper, but somehow he contrived that Marjorie sat on his other hand, and it was to her that he turned, with his eyes behind their goggles suddenly unwontedly bright, at the end of Fin's mock heroic speech proposing his health while the whole laughing, gleaming company was assuring him across the holly leaves and Christmas roses that he was "a jolly good fellow."

"Really, the kindness I have experienced here is remarkable, Miss Hardcastle," he assured her a trifle huskily. "I simply cannot account for it."

"Oh, can't you?" Marjorie stopped her contribution to the chorus to argue the point with perfect frankness. "Why, everybody says what a good sort you are, and being wounded in the war and taken prisoner and all that, they naturally like to give you a jolly time when they can to make up for it a bit."

"Wounded in the war?"

"Well, you were, weren't you? You're lame." Marjorie went red, feeling that yet once more she had committed the crime her brothers and sisters were always accusing her of and had said the wrong thing. "You've got a crocky leg, I mean."

Arthur Pollard, staring at her while the reiteration of his praises were sounded



"He rose, pale and trembling, with his eyes behind their
large, round glasses filled with a ridiculous agony"—p. 118



Drawn by
Norah Schlegel

THE QUIVER

with more or less musical effect by his assembled guests, went through the worst moments of his life. He seemed to see hundreds of smiling, kindly faces turned towards him, hundreds of glasses raised to drink his health, and himself compelled, if he would not cheat them, to shatter all this bright bubble of youthful friendliness which had seemed as wonderful as it was valuable and unexplained.

"Speech!" shouted Fin Hardcastle, and half a dozen voices echoed him. "Go on, Plantly, it's up to you!"

He heard them like something in a nightmare. He rose, pale and trembling, with his eyes behind their large, round glasses filled with a ridiculous agony.

"I say," he began, and paused, and the others, mistaking his hesitation, cheered him on. "I say, I mean it is a matter of deep regret to me, but, unfortunately, you are all labouring under a delusion. I wasn't wounded in the war . . . I've been lame all my life."

"My dear Pollard, for Heaven's sake chuck talking rot. What does it matter?" Fin interrupted, prompted by an embarrassed feeling that it must be very uncomfortable for any fellow to confess a physical handicap of the sort without the glamour of war to convert it into a sort of recommendation.

Arthur looked at him gratefully and began again.

"I am sure that is very kind of you, Hardcastle, but I am afraid you have formed other impressions of me that are equally unfounded. I was in Germany before the war. I wouldn't believe there was any danger, and I got interned."

"But you were at Kistenhangar." The whole affair had become a conversation between Fin Hardcastle and the hero of the evening now, while men looked blank and girls lost something of their sparkling brightness, standing round the long, disordered, gaily-decked table listening to their words. "Kistenhangar was a camp for wounded English officer prisoners." He looked across at his sister-in-law, apologizing mutely for hurting her by even this bare mention of the place where his brother had

died, but Kathleen apparently refused to meet his eyes.

"Yes, I was at Kistenhangar, but only as a civilian."

Grandmother Pollard, from the other end of the table, interrupted.

"Arthur doesn't like talking about it, Mr. Hardcastle, but there was very bad typhoid at Kistenhangar, and the Germans were afraid, so some of the English civilians at his other camp offered to go and nurse the men, and Arthur was one of them. He did quite a lot of nursing—they used to call him 'Dot' because he was lame and so short—dot-and-carry-one, you know."

There was a strange little sound from where Kathleen Hardcastle stood at Arthur Pollard's side.

"Not—Dot?" she asked, and stooped to look into the little penguin's face with her own all white and drawn.

Pollard reddened.

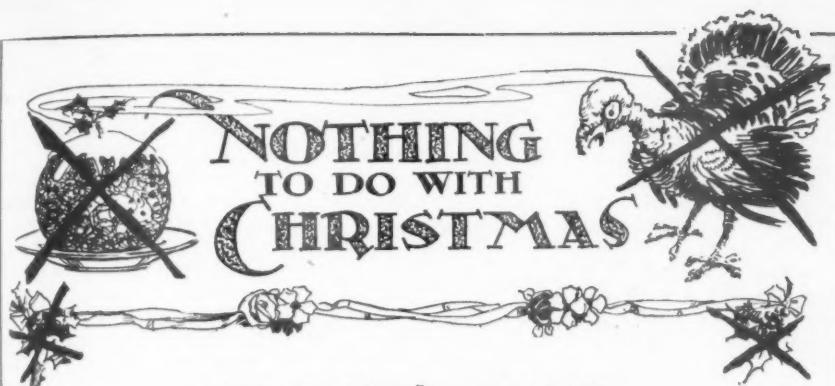
"Yes, that was it, Mrs. Hardcastle. We all had nicknames, and some of the fellows used to pretend I was a girl because there weren't any—rather silly, I know, but quite well meant."

He stopped, because Kathleen Hardcastle had both his hands in hers, and though she was pale and there were tears in her eyes all her cold stillness was broken up with tender emotion. She spoke to the watching guests, who knew her story, quite simply.

"Jim wrote to me about him often—that last dreadful time—said how kind he was, how he didn't seem to mind what he did, what risk he ran, if he could help our men." She turned to Arthur. "He always called you Dot. I don't think he even knew your name, or I would have thanked you—long before." The tears no one there had ever seen her shed were raining down Kathleen Hardcastle's cheeks, and yet she was smiling. "Sing it again," she said to the assembled company, and as they wondered, "What you sang just now, 'For he's a jolly good fellow.'"

And the members of the dancing class who had laughed at him, avoided him, derided him, rose as one to the occasion and sang it, girl and man, as they had never sung it before.





THE EDITOR'S APOLOGY

IT is a middling hot day in summer. Outside the office window a few bees are lazily crooning, outside the office door the office boy is trying to send the thermometer down a little by applying the end of an ice wafer to its base. Inside the office the Editor is alternately mopping his heated brow and sipping lukewarm water, vainly attempting to find new ideas for the Christmas Number.

In hot weather horses are allowed to wear sun bonnets, small boys bathe in streams, but editors, authors, artists have to turn up their fur-coat collars and find new ideas for Christmas.

Christmas! We one and all hate ice and snow, ghost stories and waits. The "cheerful fireside" conjures up thoughts of increased coal bills, the very Christmas waits have joined a trade union and gone out on strike. As for Christmas presents—!

I know! Let's have a special supplement without any Christmas in it! Let us do away with snow, ice, ghosts and waits. Let us—

The good news has spread, bringing relief to all and sundry—a glad shout startles the bees on the window pane, a cheer goes out

that shakes the sleepy walls, the bells ring in exultation!

The door is flung open and in rush the artists, authors, poets. Joy is on all their faces, gratitude in their hearts. The Christmas nightmare is vanquished, the roses bloom again.

Everybody is asking the why and wherefore, and for how long? Will there be no long-lost uncles, no mistletoe jokes, no "held-up-by-news" stories?

What? Only four pages for "Nothing to do with Christmas"? The millennium hasn't quite arrived, after all. But still, four pages is something to go on with, a foretaste of future emancipation.

With songs of joy authors, artists, poets hurry forth to their work, blithe and youthful once again. Four pages—and nothing to do with Christmas!

And filled with pride and happiness the Editor turns away to the task of the day after wishing all his readers "A Merry Ch—"

—I mean,

"Many Happy Returns of the Day!"

SOLD!

A FAR and near the tidings sped—
"The old-time Christmas Number's
dead!
They're taking general stuff instead."

Up rose the whole spring poet
clan,
Each djibbahed girl and long-
haired man
And to their piled-up verses
ran.

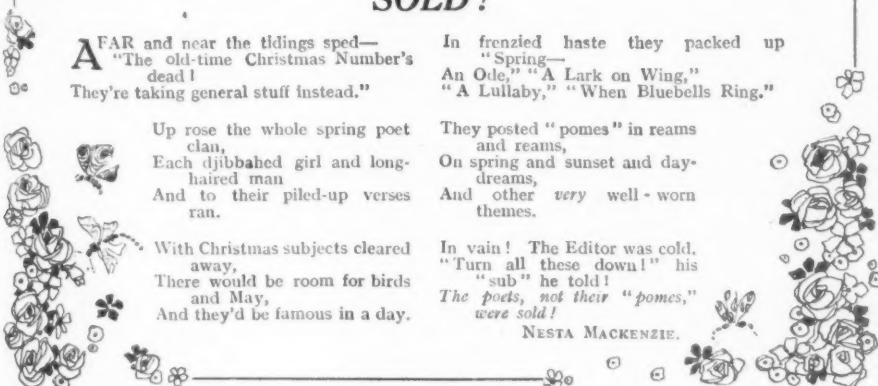
With Christmas subjects cleared
away,
There would be room for birds
and May,
And they'd be famous in a day.

In frenzied haste they packed up
"Spring—
An Ode," "A Lark on Wing,"
"A Lullaby," "When Bluebells Ring."

They posted "pomes" in reams
and reams,
On spring and sunset and day-
dreams,
And other very well-worn
themes.

In vain! The Editor was cold.
"Turn all these down!" his
"sub" he told!
The poets, not their "pomes,"
were sold!

NESTA MACKENZIE.



Philip in Search of a Plot

HE stood by the window of the large and attractive room he liked to refer to as his garret, and stared at the flats opposite without seeing them. Even his long brown hands, thrust limply into the pockets of the trousers that were shabby from choice and not from necessity, were depressed.

Philip was absolutely and deplorably stumped for a plot. The August morning was too stuffy for original thought. There were no new plots; yet a plot he must have by to-morrow.

Should he go for a walk? Return to his desk, strewn with scored papers and littered cigarette ends? The thought of both was repulsive. Ask Joyce Shelley to tea and implore her to help him? Two heads were ever better than one, especially when the second head buzzed with ideas under its cap of curious bronze-coloured hair.

A piteous note through her letter-flap, then . . . However plots might forsake Philip, he never lost his light touch with letters. I regret to say he was affected enough to wind up with a parody of one of his pet quotations:

When plots are lost
And hope is gone
Philip forlorn,

Then he crossed the road and sighed his way to the top block of flats.



Joyce could never resist Philip's notes. She came, in straight-from-the-office clothes, which didn't need her apology. In autumn browns, with a tiny wing poised for flight on her close little hat, she looked like a wood-nymph who had been shopping in Bond Street. Philip felt a breath of inspiration blow into the room with her and told her so.

But Joyce recognized the importance of WORK. Tea, which she had to make and pour out, of course, was merely an interlude. Then cigarettes, and intensity.

"So you're stuck for a plot?" she comiserated him, from the big Oxford chair. Philip drooped from the mantelpiece; the droop was overdone; he was beginning to feel cheerful, but would have died rather than own it.

"As stuck as a pig," he lamented. "There are only five plots for short stories in the world, and I've sworn not to use one of them again."

"Cheer up!" said Joyce, "and let's hear them. We may get an idea that way."

"Plot one," groaned Philip, "I may call THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH. Hero mistakes heroine's brother for a rival, or vice versa. No inquiries are ever made, but there is a great deal of strong silent business or weeping, according to

A Passing Fancy *By Audrey Forrest*

sex, till the fatuous mistake is cleared up, generally by the engaging prattle of a little chie-ild."

"You can't use it," said Joyce. "Go on."

"Plot two is A LITTLE HUMAN DRAMA concerning a 'mouse-coloured' wife whose husband begins to find her dowdy, and to work late at the office at the same time. Wife is first sorrowful, then inspired to spend a month's housekeeping money on beauty parlours and the latest in little frocks. Her husband remembers how to kiss her, the vamp is vanquished (off) and the curtain falls, leaving the cynic wondering."

"Short stories aren't meant for cynics," said Joyce. "Third, please."

"The third is THE LONG ARM OF COINCIDENCE. It has a hundred guises. One of the most popular is a pretty domestic tale of a bankrupt young couple who break a china ornament or unpick a cushion which proves to be crackling with bank-notes put there by a philanthropist in the disguise of a hard-hearted relative."

Joyce nodded. "It has the wild charm of improbability. But go on."

"The fourth is A MARRIAGE HAS BEEN ARRANGED. In this two young people who have conceived a violent hatred for the unknown partners chosen for them by officious relatives meet by fluke and fall in love. The fifth I won't bore you with, as I believe I've just thought of a really original plot at last!"

"Bring it round to-morrow at tea-time," murmured Joyce, and, in spite of his protests, she crept off exaggeratedly tiptoe from the room.



He looked pale and interesting when he brought it round at tea-time.

"Sat up half the night writing it," he explained, but he looked at Joyce, not at the typescript.

She read it calmly on the sofa while he smoked nervously by the window. It was a story written with his celebrated light charm, of two attractive young people (bearing a strong family likeness to himself and Joyce) who met and exchanged persiflage an appropriate number of times till the last page, when they became a little intense. The final paragraph described, very charmingly, a kiss.

"Well?" he demanded, when she had fluttered the last page, and now sat smiling thoughtfully.

"I like it awfully," she hesitated, "but, oh, Philip, I hate to tell you . . . it's the Fifth Plot!"

"My soul!" he cried, "so it is! But it's the best of them, after all."

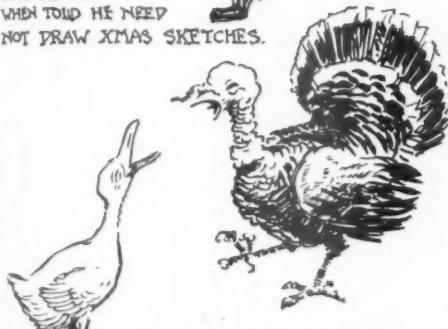
And, very charmingly, he kissed her.



THE ARTIST'S JOY
WHEN TOLD HE NEED
NOT DRAW XMAS SKETCHES.



THE AUTHOR FINDS IT MUCH MORE PLEASANT BATHING IN THE BRINY' THAN STRUGGLING WITH FREEZING CHRISTMAS IDEAS.
DO IT ALAND



MUTUAL JOY WHEN THE POULTRY HEAR THAT THEY WILL NOT BE CUT OFF IN THEIR PRIME AT XMAS.



BINKS BUYS A SMALL CAR WITH WHAT HE SAVES ON XMAS BOXES.



FATHER CHRISTMAS STUDIES THE ADVT. COLUMNS TO FIND ANOTHER JOB.



AND THE NATIONAL UNION OF PLUM PUDDING, MINCE PIE & FEDERATED TRADES HOLD A THANKSGIVING PROCESSION.

SANTA CLAUS TAKES A REST-CURE

*Agnes M. Miall interviews
the Jolly Old Saint*

"MAY I see Santa Claus? Press," I said importantly.

"I am Santa Claus. Please come in."

I went in, rather dazed. This somewhat rotund gentleman, yellow-haired and yellow-bearded, clad in immaculate flannels—*this* the dear old party of red gown and Christmas fame?

He laughed gaily at my amazement.

"Quite a transformation, you're thinking? So it is. I never thought myself that the day would come when my hair would unsilver itself, and I'd be dressed for the river on a mid-December morning. Almost too good to be true! This new idea of abolishing Christmas, you know."

Light began to dawn.

"Yes," he went on exuberantly. "The best idea ever! To think that I'm off duty this year and can take the rest-cure I've always dreamed about in vain! My suit-case is packed, and my reindeer will take me down to riverside cottage before they're turned out to grass for the winter. Then punting for me, lazing—and all delights!"

"I gather," I said rather faintly, "that you don't enjoy this parcels delivery business on Christmas Eve?"

"Enjoy it!" he answered. His jovial face grew almost bitter. "Do you expect me to like trapesing about over roofs and sliding down flues all night long? Cold, stiff work like that! And the difficulty I have in finding the right houses! It never seems to occur to people to number or name their chimneys.

"Of course I've carried on all these years—one must do one's bit—but I'm not going to pretend this armistice isn't the best thing that's ever happened to me."

He was beaming again. "My hair turned yellow with joy when the news was 'phoned through. It's been getting yellower ever since. D'you hear those sleigh bells? I must be off. Good-bye-ee!"



HOW TO KEEP COOL

Hot Weather Hints

A n infallible method of keeping cool is to remove one's top garment and lie down full length in eighteen inches or so of snow. If no snow has fallen since last year, turn out the gas-stove, open doors and windows wide and recline on the floor in the centre of the ensuing current of air.

In travelling by train, fling down both windows, and, if possible, put one's head slightly out of the window, taking care, of course, not to collide with bridges, etc.

An efficient method of ventilating the feet is to bore three holes through the soles of each boot. Otherwise a little ice slipped in a slipper goes a long way.

At night-time a delicious sense of coolness is produced by packing a hot-water bottle with cold water and leaving the stopper half unscrewed. Place between the bed-clothes ten minutes before retiring to rest.

The cold bath should be used all the year round, but it will be rendered more efficacious if, before taking a plunge, one stands on the brink and recites "We are Seven." This will also prevent danger of chills by too violent a shock to the over-heated body.

Always choose a bracing situation for your house. An open position with a high altitude is more likely to catch the breeze, but, to be certain, choose a north-east aspect, and see that there is a wide space between door and floor.

Competition

The Editor of "Nothing to Do with Christmas" offers a number of

MAGNIFICENT PRIZES

for the best short essay (in not more than 2 words) on "WHAT I SHALL DO WITH THE MONEY I DON'T HAVE TO SPEND ON CHRISTMAS PRESENTS THIS YEAR." All MSS. to bear name and sugar coupon number of competitor.

Closing date, DECEMBER 32nd, 1920

1st PRIZE: Any 100 Rejected MSS. from the piles in the Editor's office.

2nd PRIZE: 50 Yards Best Red Tape (Government Surplus Stock).

Jill on a Ranch

by

GERTRUDE PAGE

(Author of "Where the Strange Roads Go Down," "The Veldt Trail,"
"Jill's Rhodesian Philosophy," etc.)

"Jill on a Ranch"—which started in the November number—narrates the experiences of "Jill" and "Chip" (otherwise "the Man") on a Rhodesian ranch. In the previous instalment "Jill" deals with the journey from England and the difficulties of reaching their outpost station.

IV

Umdara Ranch,

Rhodesia.

YOUR letter came last week, dear Général, and of course I was delighted to know how pleased and bucked you and Frills are over your "serial story." What you tell me about Frills is wonderful. How clever and persevering he is! And I'm sure your little device to enable him to light his own cigarettes fills his soul with joy. Are you falling in love with his sister? It sounds rather like it. As I've been in love with Frills ever since I saw him in the bus I suppose I must forgive you. Chip and I loved your account of the Investiture, but it made up both feel rather weepy. Frills in all his regalia of medals, and his two empty sleeves, smiling cheerfully at the King, and the King standing with his hand on his shoulder. . . . I am told there are great numbers of people in England who want to do without a King, and who think the Prince of Wales's allowance might be put to better uses. I wonder what they propose to give the nation's heroes in place of

the Royal handshake that means so much to them, and who that is born of woman could be dear to the Empire's heart as the Prince of Wales is dear? One woman said to me, "But it is the kings who make war!" And I say the Prince of Wales is one of our greatest assets for peace because he will cement the Dominions, and the nations will know that such numbers will flock to his standard in an hour of danger that they will fear to arouse the lion.

Speaking of lions, Grimp has been rather bothered with them lately. Two nights ago he had four beasts killed. Two lions stampeded the cattle from the kraal and managed to get four. Then, having amused themselves sufficiently, they settled down and ate up about 100 lbs. of beef. In the evening Grimp and Chip sat up for them, but no signs of a lion, so they decided to poison one carcass and take the others away.

They went back to the homestead to send the driver out with mules and wagon to bring in the two that were unpoisoned, and then turned in for the night. The next morning, to their speechless wrath, they found the driver had waited until daybreak, with the result that the poisoned carcass was

THE QUIVER

untouched and one of the others gorged, and after another good feed the lions had got away untouched. The next we heard of them they were killing cattle on another ranch, and the ranchers were pretty sick with Grimp that he had let them escape.

Poor Grimp has been unlucky this year, for he had had two beasts killed a fortnight before, but a man beyond him has lost twelve. Our cattle have been stampeded twice, but we have not had any killed as yet. Mary is a good deal impressed at the thought of lions in our immediate vicinity, and occasionally she is to be seen looking out across the veldt as if she expected them to come strolling up to the house. If she had been looking in the right direction last Thursday she would have seen something that many eyes would give much to have seen. A beautiful pair of sable walked up to our garden fence and stood looking at the flowers. I gazed at them dumbfounded, too astonished to speak or move.

I have occasionally, when riding, come upon a herd of them unexpectedly in some remote corner of the ranch, but I have never before heard of two strolling up to a house. I felt grateful Chip was away at the dip. He would love to have seen them no doubt, but I have not yet met the sportsman who could resist such a chance for a pair of splendid horns. To me they felt like honoured guests, and I watched them with delight as they looked calmly round, surveyed the homestead with wondering eyes, and finally strolled off towards a ridge of granite. Another time two kudu walked across the ranch, but I did not see these. Some boys rushed up to tell the Man, and he went off quickly with his gun, but a little bird gave them warning, and they vanished like lightning. In all the years that I have been in the country I have never seen a lion nor heard one roar, but I see an expression in Mary's eyes that suggests she is already weaving a wonderful account of those two that stampeded our cattle, in which they will roar outside her bedroom window, and she will see them making off in the moonlight, carrying a bullock apiece.

She will also be able to say that she had a snake in her bedroom, which is a pity, because there has never been one in mine in fifteen years, and it would be quite a mistake for people at home to suppose that snakes crawl about our bedrooms and bask on the stoeps. Heaven knows how this one got into her room! She heard a hissing

noise, and looking round discovered one of the cats staring at something behind the door. She came to me with rather a scared face, and we investigated together. And we found a thin snake, about a yard long, hissing in a frightened way at the cat. At our call a house-boy came along with a stick and killed it, and I laughed at Mary's luck (!), but I do hope her imagination will not get the better of her discretion, for we do not want Rhodesia painted in England as a country where you bump up against lions and snakes every other day.

The only other time I remember a snake in a bedroom is when Chip, taking an afternoon siesta, was awakened by a sharp yap from a greyhound pup by his bed. He looked up and found a cobra, with its head raised high, was leering at him a yard or two away. He shouted for a house-boy, and fortunately one was near at hand. The boy got his gun for him, and he blew its head off. Of course, Chip doesn't tell the story quite like that; he would never play with such a chance—his cobra does and looks all sorts of weird things—but my point is mainly this: if you do get a snake in your bedroom now and then—well, what about it? . . .

We went over to condole with Grimp about his lions, and incidentally to take him some eggs and a piece of buck. I always feel a sort of responsibility towards Grimp's commissariat, for men living quite alone, as he, are apt to be badly underfed. They seldom buy anything but tinned meat, and it is not always easy to replenish the larder with one's gun. Grimp, at any rate, is usually too busy with his experiments, etc., so he just "opens a tin," and the tin lasts until it is scarcely fit for human consumption; then it has an extra strong dose of curry powder and is finished off. For breakfast he seldom has anything except porridge and jam, which I maintain is not sufficient for any man with a day's work before him, so I generally contrive to save some eggs for him now and then. After all, his experiments and his canny devices which we all copy, excepting perhaps the Juggernaut car, are useful to the neighbourhood, so the least we can do is to keep him well fed.

Of course, he might keep fowls himself, but in an unlucky moment he allowed his driver to begin keeping them, and he soon found that all the hens worth anything belonged to the driver and all the weedy,

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"LOOK WHAT I'M
HAVING FOR MY
BIRTHDAY —
SOME REAL CAKE
MADE WIV' —"

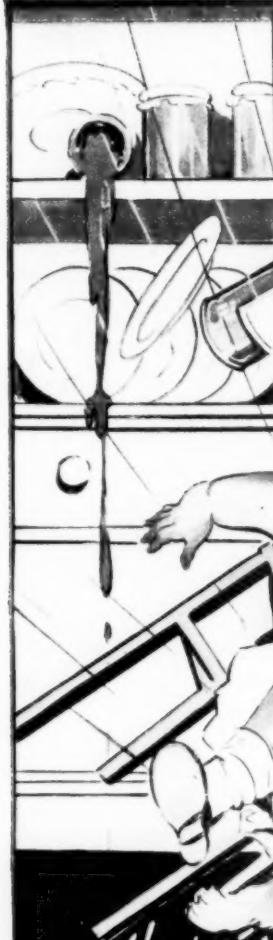


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JILL ON A RANCH

useless little wasters were his. The driver likewise collected the eggs, and poor Grimp only got one or two occasionally. When hawks and crows carried off chickens they showed a remarkable knowledge in always choosing Grimp's, and even the rats seemed to distinguish Grimp's eggs. So he gave it up and left the driver in possession openly, as well as clandestinely. The commissariat is always a very difficult question for men living alone, and that is one reason perhaps why the married ones prosper the quickest. They have better health and fewer household worries. The single ones get very indifferent as to what they eat. I remember Chip going to help a man who had Quarter Evil on his ranch. Three days later he turned up at 10.30 A.M. and wanted a good square meal. It transpired that Conquest had given him sausages for breakfast, lunch and dinner on each of the three days. When he saw them on the fourth morning he struck.

"Awfully sorry, old man," Conquest had replied to his pointed objections. "I got a gross of tins cheap when I was last in town at Winton's sale . . ." So Chip returned home, and said he would look in again when the sausages were finished. The great bugbear at Grimp's is cheeses. He makes them himself, and they are really excellent at an early date. But Grimp fancies them at a late date, when, according to Chip, they literally *talk*. Occasionally Grimp gives me a cheese, and then he will come to a meal and watch a little anxiously for the cheese course. As long as it is moderately fresh Chip and I enjoy it, and Grimp is always afraid we shall eat too much. Because as soon as it becomes—well, talkative, we ask Grimp to take it back, which, of course, he does gleefully.

On this particular afternoon when we arrived at Grimp's we found he had already two visitors, Mr. and Mrs. Ireland, and Chip and I secretly hoped there was enough cake to go round. If I had known I should have brought cake, but Grimp was not one to encourage visitors, and it was a most unusual circumstance to find anyone there. They were sitting on his veranda, in the midst of a pretty general litter which included the meat-safe larder, and we joined them with cheery greetings. We are a cheery community in the Umvukwes, for we nearly always have some fresh and novel experience to tell each other about, and you really feel rather proud if yours is the worst.

Certainly Mrs. Newcombe and I always vie with each other. The last time she came to see me she was bursting with an account of how they had been awakened in the night by strange, harsh tinklings wandering round the house.

They listened sleepily for a time, and then were startled wide awake by the sudden advent of a harsh tinkle on to the veranda outside their bedroom door. They sat up and stared at the open doorway. What weird animal could this possibly be? Finally they got up and peeped out. On the veranda in the moonlight they discovered a strange donkey with a bell round its neck, and scattered abroad among the flower beds and over the tennis court were eleven other strange donkeys—a complete team, in fact, and all with bells round their necks.

Of course, they had to go out in their night attire and collect the marauders, or they might have had no garden or tennis court left by morning. She related it all to me with great gusto, but you may be sure I wasn't outdone. No, not Jill! For though things happen pretty often to her they happen much oftener to me—as they would do naturally, with a rash husband like Chip.

"That's nothing!" I began with a light airiness. "Why, what do you think happened to us last night? . . . We were awakened by a most *dreadful* noise—it might have been all the devils in hell let loose, such roarings and bellowings of condensed fury! I can't even describe it. Chip sprang out of bed, pulled on some slippers and rushed outside. I slipped on a little more and followed him—gingerly. The awful noises came from the pedigree cattle stalls, and I saw Chip running towards them carrying a knob-kerry. As he passed the boys' huts he shouted for Boots, our capitaou, who appeared very quickly and ran with him. Meanwhile the awful noises increased (by this, of course, Mrs. Newcombe was staring with eyes and mouth open), and I crept on in fear and trembling, and what do you think had happened! Our two biggest pedigree bulls had managed to get loose from their stables, and were having a furious fight in the dead of night!

"And there was Chip, clad only in pyjamas and slippers, rushing into the fight armed only with a knob-kerry. Goodness knows how many guardian angels have to be told off to take care of this rash Irishman of mine! Anyhow, he and the native capitaou laid about them to such effect with

THE QUIVER

their primitive weapons that they managed to separate the ferocious bulls and get each one back into its own stable. Then Chip tripped back to the house, kicked off his slippers with an indignant 'D— those bulls . . .' slid down under the bedclothes, and in two minutes was snoring in peaceful oblivion."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Newcombe. "I should be frightened out of my life if any of our bulls started fighting near the house in broad daylight—if it was in the dead of night . . ." Words failed her.

"Well, I am," I told her. "But what's the good? Chip is too sleepy to take any notice when the fight is over, and the next morning he only laughs. He said, 'By Jove! didn't I just fetch old Blazes a beauty across the nose! . . .' and then he chuckles over it all breakfast time."

Even Mary begins to see the uselessness of bemoaning. "Why, he might have been killed, m'm, and all of us attacked in our beds! . . ." she said in a voice of horror.

"Oh, yes," I agreed lightly, "and gorged bits of us lying all around—only he wasn't, so there you are! . . ." After which she

laughed and made the enigmatic remark, "What a safe place Clapham Common seems! . . ."



"Chaswenga opened the safe door and took out a little dried-up piece of meat"

But I don't seem to be getting on with Grimp's tea-party and the little scrap of indiarubber cake I carefully divided into five portions. We sat there chatting, eating a crumb at a time, and admiring his delightful view, when presently I became conscious of a peculiar odour, and commenced glancing sideways over my shoulder at his meat-safe larder seated just behind me. Once when I glanced at Mrs. Ireland I noticed she also was glancing surreptitiously over her shoulder, but at the store-room door which happened to be close behind her, while her nostrils twitched in a "give away" manner. For a little longer we managed to be polite and appear indifferent, and then I caught Mrs. Ireland's eye, and suddenly I said, "Really, Grimp, I believe that piece of rietbuck we sent you a month ago is still in your dinky little larder!"

Grimp looked from me to Mrs. Ireland and then back again, then he began to laugh. "You're a nice couple of visitors," he said, and shouted, "Chaswenga! Hi, Chaswenga!" A cook-boy with an abnormally solemn face appeared. "The Donas say inyama in safe maninggi stinkie—take it away."

Chaswenga opened the safe door and took out a little dried-up piece of meat, looking at it with a glance of affectionate commiseration as he carried it away. Mrs. Ireland and I breathed more freely, and the conversation became general again.

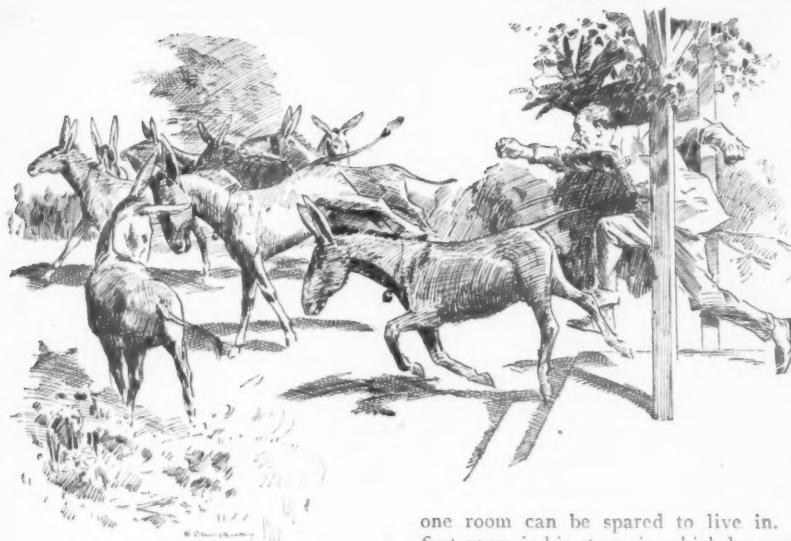
But not for long.

Very shortly my nostrils began to twitch again, and glancing at Mrs. Ireland surreptitiously, I saw it was the same with her. I tried not to take it seriously, but at last my tongue betrayed me and I remarked tentatively, "Do you know, Grimp, I'm afraid we've been guilty of an injustice!"

His blue eyes twinkled suddenly. "What's the matter now?"

"Well, it doesn't seem to have been the meat," and I felt my nose making unmistakable signs.

Then Mrs. Ireland butted in. "Of course it wasn't. It's a cheese. I felt sure of it all along, only I didn't like to say so."



"Scattered abroad among the flower beds were eleven other strange donkeys"—p. 125

"Chaswenga! . . . Chaswenga!" shouted Grimp, and when the solemn black face appeared, "Take the cheese away. The Donas say *that* is maningi stinkie now," and he laughed with a relish.

Chaswenga solemnly opened the safe door and took out a little green piece of cheese that one felt would have winked if it could (perhaps it did!) and solemnly carried it off.

"I hope you won't disarrange my domestic affairs any further," said Grimp, and then Chip must needs begin sniffing audibly and exclaim, "I say, old chap . . . those potatoes in the corner there . . ."

But Grimp threw a tomato at him and we made him subside, politely eating another crumb of the indiarubber cake.

I'm sure Grimp's domestic affairs, as he calls them, would fill you with delight and envy, Général. They are arranged on a labour-saving plan with a vengeance. His little house contains three rooms and a veranda along the front—the typical abode of the country, intended, of course, for a sitting-room in the middle and a bedroom each end, the kitchen being separate at the back. But Grimp's labour-saving plans include doing most of his farming on the premises, so to speak, and therefore only

one room can be spared to live in. The first room is his store, in which he emulates Chip by keeping sheep dip and cart-grease and paraffin side by side with sugar, bacon, and the famous cheeses; the second room is a bed-sitting-room where apparently he keeps nearly everything in the world he possesses; and the third room is stacked with sacks of mealies. When he has a visitor, a luxury he does not indulge in more than he can help, a little space for a bed is made among the mealies.

One feels, contemplating the result, that the whole is a deeply laid plan to safeguard himself against too many visitors. For you can have an endless stream if you keep open house, and with commissariat difficulties like ours there is a great deal to be said for the plan of poking stray visitors in among the mealie sacks. Of course, a welcome, invited guest is allowed to sleep in the sitting-room in the midst of his worldly possessions, and then he himself retires to the mealie room. At meals you can reach most of the things you want without moving. It is like life in a small yacht, sailing across the tempestuous seas of the Rhodesian veldt.

But this is not nearly all.

The homestead itself is planted at the foot of a magnificent granite kopje, very hot in summer and very cold in winter, but with the advantage, from Grimp's point of view, that he can see over most of his ranch from the veranda. He can see the tobacco lands and mealie lands, the manna, the

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wheat, and the beans, and by stepping off his veranda and walking fifty yards he can see how much his various experimental grasses grow per hour; a little farther on he can stroll among his fruit trees. Almost any boys working on the lands can be seen from the veranda, so not much chance of them idling half the day. Even his buildings are all close at hand, including the tobacco barn, and his bulls repose, or otherwise, about one hundred yards away.

Now, on our ranch, the mealie lands are four miles from the house, the tobacco, if there were any, would be two miles away, and everything else correspondingly. The only thing I have ever seen really handy was a haystack, and that, much to my astonishment, I found actually sitting on a flat rock beside the cattle sheds, just where it was wanted. Grimp can see his cattle in the distance, more or less, and when one is sick the boys just fetch him. To get to ours we ride far and wide over the country, and then are lucky if we find them. But in all justice to Chip it has to be admitted that our losses from casual ills are infinitesimal compared to Grimp's, and our cattle as a whole in far better condition. But there was one tragic period when one of Grimp's herds was stampeded three times in two weeks by lions or leopards. The third time they went out into the wide world and more or less vanished from ken.

For a week he searched systematically. Then he confined himself to sending boys for the stray bunches at neighbouring ranches after being apprized of their whereabouts. Then he said he was "fed up" with them, and he hadn't time to search the world for a hundred head of cattle in twos and threes, so they could just go to Hades, which, in the long run, resolved itself into coming back to him, for various native kraals collected them by degrees and handed them over after demanding big ransoms which they did not get, and many odd ones strolled back into his other herds.

I could not help contrasting what would have been the state of affairs upon our ranch should anything so appalling ever occur as one hundred and seventy head of cattle missing.

Chip would have been here, there and everywhere, exhausting himself and the entire neighbourhood—to say nothing of his vocabulary for such disasters, big as it is—and we at the homestead must certainly have gone down on our knees and implored

the good God to send those straying cattle quickly back to the fold, lest madness descended upon us all, and we were no more men and women, but demented children. "But, of course," as Grimp remarks bitterly, "the lions and leopards never get as far as you. They find all they want on my place, and I am your unwilling and un-thanked protector!" Which always makes Chip laugh most ungraciously.

And all the time Grimp is such a dear. The latest thing he had to show us was a new wash-hand stand that he had made for himself. A perfectly gorgeous thing. Wood of the country, cut down, sawn, and planed on the ranch—little drawers with shining brass handles, little shelves, an ornamental back showing a green curtain through, a chosen dark surface with fine grain as smooth as a billiard table. Grimp presented it to us with pardonable pride as it stood erect in his bed-sitting-room amid all the medley of his worldly possessions, looking a little scornful of its surroundings. But, indeed, when he expresses his soul in wash-hand stands like that it is small wonder that mere cattle may stray away over the world and come back when they choose, and mere visitors may sleep with the sacks of mealies.

I was not quite satisfied with the measure of admiration in Chip's eyes. I felt he was longing to say it was a waste of time, so I seized the first opportunity to remark pointedly to Mrs. Ireland, "Wouldn't it be just heavenly out here to have a rancher-husband who is not too busy to consider the *inside* of his house and actually *make* furniture! We had a packing-case for a wash-stand for ten years, and then Chip picked one up for half a crown at a sale! . . . I've been enduring it bravely ever since . . ." at least, that is how I meant to finish, but I found myself being propelled quickly towards the water tub, and had to stop short and cry "Kamerade!" . . .

Of course, Général, you mustn't let Frills think that it is usual at Rhodesian tea-parties for the guests to be disturbed by "maninggi stinkie" articles of food and demand their removal. I doubt if it would happen anywhere but at Grimp's, and possibly at ours if the man had a lion or leopard skull drying on the veranda. But when this has happened we haven't waited to request its removal. We've run away, like hares, ourselves! At the same time I had an interesting experience once at the Dam Farm, I remember, when some visitors

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from England drove out from Salisbury to tea. A thunderstorm was threatening which made them nervous of climbing to the house, so we said we would bring tea down to them and have it in the big shed. This was accordingly done, all the family silver (ahem!) and fancy cakes, etc., being set out in the shed. Half-way through tea it was observable that we were all a little puzzled by a curious mound beside us. It seemed somehow not to belong there, and was lightly covered over with straw. At last I taxed Chip openly, noting the immediate interest in the four pairs of eyes of my visitors. Chip was perfectly unperturbed. "I expect it's my sick cow," he said. "She died this afternoon."

Comment is superfluous, but it must be difficult sometimes for visitors from England to know exactly what *is* the correct behaviour for guests in unfamiliar circumstances . . .

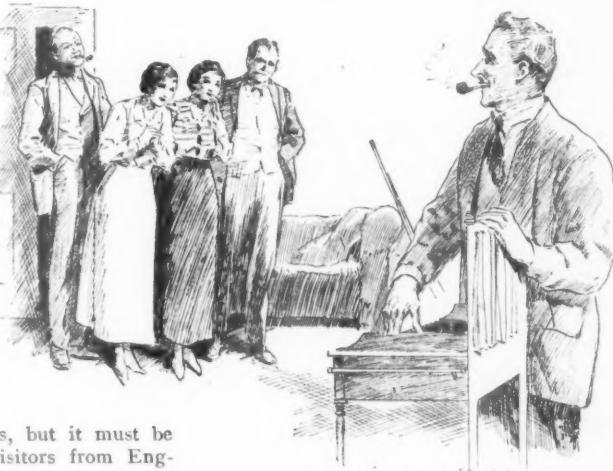
And that's all for to-day, because two men are just arriving for the ranchers' and farmers' meeting to-morrow, which takes place at Umvukwe Meadows, and I must greet them with tea, etc.

The last time one of these particular guests arrived he had walked ten miles in pouring rain, arrayed in Scottish kilts. The kilts had sucked in moisture like a thirsty land, but as soon as he seated himself at our luncheon table they proceeded to pour it out again in a pool all round his chair.

Then his boots, caked with mud, washed themselves in the pool, and anyone who wanted a mud bath could have had one for the asking. Which had a humorous side, of course, only we happened to have a new dining-room carpet of Brussels texture we were rather proud of. But then we were looking for trouble when we bought a Brussels carpet, for nothing more ornamental than coconut matting could ever stand the strain of living upon our dining-room floor, where five dogs and seven cats delight to eat their meals, and which Chip occasionally

embellishes with trypan blue, ink, cart-grease and the various relics of a farmyard that adhere to his boots.

The last time the other visitor came he spilt oranges and lemons all over the floor, but that I forgave easily, and I hope he'll do it again from a sackful he has brought with him.



"Grimp presented it to us with pardonable pride"

V

Umdara Ranch,

Rhodesia.

THE farmers' meeting was a very cheery affair this month, partly no doubt because it happened to be Colland's turn to act as host, and he is always very hospitable. Grimp is chairman—Heaven knows why, but I suppose we wanted a change, and Grimp with his monocle looks rather nice in the chair, even if he doesn't do as much talking as some.

All the same, we all know the way to make him talk, and Colland knows it best of all. In fact, we like to hurry on the business part of the meeting when Grimp is in the chair, at a place like Umvukwe Meadows, to get it over before he becomes too talkative. The poultry expert was there on this occasion, and we asked him if he could tell whether an egg was a cock or a hen by holding a needle over it on a piece of cotton. The needle was produced to see

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what it would do, and two minutes later there was Grimp holding it over a lump of beef on the luncheon table. "What on earth! . . ." began Mrs. Newcombe. "Thash all risch," mimicked our elegant chairman. "I want to know if thish beef isch cow or bull! . . ."

It was perhaps unwise to hold our poultry lecture after lunch instead of before, because the chairman had made so many speeches he didn't seem inclined to leave off, and as it was rather infectious we all asked the poultry expert verbose questions for the sake of talking. Finally we produced a hen and wanted to be told how to recognize a good layer and many other things about it. I know he said we couldn't expect fowls to lay if they got wet, and that was why it was bad for them to sleep in trees.

"But mine refuse to sleep anywhere else," I declared, "unless it is on the spare room bed."

"Then you can't expect them to lay," he insisted cheerfully.

"But I do," I argued.

"They won't if they get wet," he reiterated.

"You must make macintoshes for them," said the chairman gravely, "and—and—give them hot toddy at night . . ."

A new member was proposed at this meeting who seems likely to vie with Grimp in giving us something to talk about. He is a New Zealander, and he has taken up land for ranching in the Umvukwe district. He took a tent and went to look at it, *after* buying it, and liked it so much he went off to procure some household necessaries. We hear that he arrived back, having expended all his spare money upon three motors, a piano and a kettle! We next heard he had ingeniously made one of his motors into a wagon, and that he gave it a trial trip about the town, fixed behind his car, before starting out to his ranch.

After a wild career he looked round and discovered no wagon was attached, and no signs of it anywhere. He demanded of the boy beside him what had become of the wagon.

"It came off some long while ago, Boss," replied the boy cheerfully. "It just fell over sideways."

"Oh!" his master is reported to have replied. "So you and I are having a blank, blank joy-ride, are we! . . ." It took him all day to find his wagon, and I believe bits

of it are still being found to this day. We all feel he is twin-brother to Grimp, only Grimp would have had boys running behind all the way, and after the disaster would have left the wagon, like his runaway cattle, to find its own way home.

The circumstance that is giving us all the keenest joy just now is the rumour that Grimp, having expended a high sum upon a turbine and a great deal of labour, to find it is no use in the end because he has not a strong enough flow of water, is trying to sell it to the New Zealander.

If the New Zealander likes motors and pianos it is quite probable he will have a fancy for turbines, and we await the outcome of Grimp's manœuvring with beating hearts. We wouldn't for worlds mention that Grimp has developed many grey hairs and wrinkles over it, because, after all, Grimp is one of ourselves and the New Zealander isn't—yet.

Also, if a man sets up housekeeping on three motors, a piano, and a kettle, he might just as well throw in a turbine. Chip is content with a common or garden water-wheel. It cost him about seventy pounds, and grinds four sacks of meal a day. Grimp was inclined to be sniffy about it at first, but since his aristocratic turbine has not ground one sack in three years, he has had to climb down and, so to speak, pass the time of day with our water-wheel. Finally, he asked Chip to grind for him at so much per bag.

"What about the turbine?" inquired Chip politely.

"The turbine can go to ——" said Grimp with a ferocious note, and we all hope, because Grimp is one of ourselves, that it is going to the New Zealander.

Anyhow, we made him a member of the Ranchers' and Farmers' Association, and considered within ourselves secretly what bugbear possessions we might hope to load upon him presently.

Certainly Paget will try to sell him the horse that won't let anyone dismount if he can help it, and Colland has a biting mule to dispose of, and Newcombe has a dogcart too heavy for use, and we have a gun-shy setter and two or three queen cows, and Colbrook has a few old bulls with pedigrees and nothing else, and, to a surety, we'll all be offering him kittens with both hands in a few weeks. In fact, I have already heard Mrs. Newcombe and Mrs. Paget "'avin' a few words" as to who

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had the first right to offload kittens on him.

You see, Général, this cat offspring question is becoming a serious problem, like the rabbits in Australia. We've all given each other kittens so often that there are no vacancies left, and what is to be done with the overplus? Of course, there should be restriction of output, but even the method of leaving only one in every six is overrunning the Umvukwes, and cousins to the third and fourth generation abound in all directions.

And the method of one in six has decided drawbacks in itself. Chip is a tender-hearted man, and the wholesale slaughter of kittens, which he is called upon to achieve, is a nerve-racking business for him.

I dare say most ranchers just hand them over to a native to drown, but Chip thinks that is cruel. This is

rather sweet of him, because it leaves the onus of dispatch in his hands. First, we coax away the proud mother and give her dainties. Then someone, moving like a thief, takes away five of the kittens (there are never less than six) and hands them to Chip in a duster. Chip, breathing anathema on a cruel world, takes them outside and hits each kitten separately on the head with a stick, which kills it instantly. Then five pathetic little bodies lie in a row, and the piccanin is told to bury them, which he does by throwing them on the rubbish heap.

Proud mother returns to the bosom of her family, finds there is more room than there was before, breathes to herself a fervent "Thank God," and licks the remaining kitten with a creamy tongue.

Chip returns, looking thoroughly disgusted, and says sadly, "Where's the poor

mother?" . . . And all this takes place four or five times a year. Just occasionally it happens that proud mother frets, but there's nearly always an odd kitten or so knocking around, and we persuade her it is a case for adoption. Sometimes two mothers share their duties, one taking both families in the morning and the other in the afternoon, and at night they are all comfy together, with the addition of proud father, who is never



"Finally we produced a hen and wanted to be told how to recognize a good layer"

Drawn by
E. P. Kinsella

in two minds as to when he will take his turn.

There is something of an analogy to the results of polygamy among the natives. Our piccanin occasionally takes an hour off because his mother has come to see him. It puzzled Mary and me a good deal why his mother varied so in appearance. Then one day there were three together, and "the piccanin's mother" had come to see him. Mary asked our stately house-boy Chezura which *was* the piccanin's mother.

"All mothers," said he. "Piccanin has three."

"Oh, really!" replied Mary politely, and then retired to hide her amusement.

I have noticed that occasionally Mary's sense of humour betrays her. Last week Chip told us solemnly that Boots, the capitaou's wife, was dead, and that she had died about twelve miles away at another

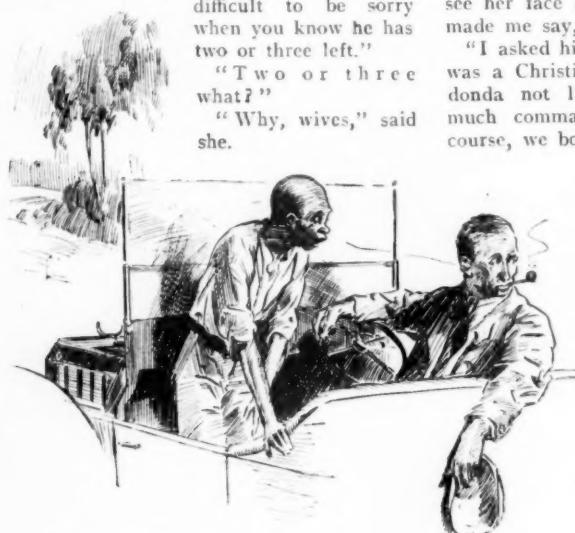
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kraal and a boy had come to tell him. It was sad to think he should not have been with her at the last, and we felt very sorry for Boots. I expressed the pathos of the case rather beautifully to Mary, who tried to look appropriately sad, but did not succeed very well. After a moment or two I taxed her with this. "Oh, well," she said, with an unmanageable twinkle, "it's rather

difficult to be sorry when you know he has two or three left."

"Two or three what?"

"Why, wives," said she.



"He looked round and discovered no signs of it anywhere"—p. 130

does as I tell her. I want to travel about and see things. Too much money *two* travel about. I tell her stay, and *I* see things. By and by come and tell her about them."

"I told him it was not much fun for her, and he said, 'She Christian too. Do as I tell her.' . . .

Mary was brushing my hair, and I could see her face in the glass. Her expression made me say, "Well, go on. . . ."

"I asked him if Zandonda (the cook-boy) was a Christian, and he said, 'No. Zandonda not like Christianity. Says "too much commandment,"'" and at that, of course, we both laughed outright.

"I should think poor Mrs. Chezura would agree with him if she dare," I suggested. "What a piquant situation if she came down here to tell him so, and said she had elected to let go Christianity and travel about with him!"

"But she never would dare," said Mary with conviction, and I wondered if she was a little in awe of the lordly Chezura herself.

You asked me if she likes being out here, and, frankly, I don't know. She is very guarded in expressing her opinion, but occasionally a side-light seems to betray her. As, for instance, the afternoon when we took her out in the car and went to Lightway's for the mail. Lightway has a charming little bungalow of pisé work, with thatched roof and pretty veranda decked with climbing roses. There is a glorious view in front of it, and we regard it as one of the show homesteads in the Umvukwes.

"There!" said Chip cheerfully. "Isn't that a little ideal home? How would you like to live there, Mary?"

"Wouldn't it be terrible!" replied Mary in a low, heartfelt tone.

For a moment Chip looked dumbfounded, and then we all laughed. But I did not pursue the subject.

The next day I asked her if she would like to try riding, and added, "Because if so you may have Ginger sometimes, and I will lend you a divided skirt."

"Oh. . ." said I, and then we both grinned. "How do you know?" I inquired.

"Chezura told me."

"Has he several wives?"

"No. He is a Christian, so he has only one, and she is five hundred miles away."

I felt uncertain as to Mary's frame of mind over this, so I asked discreetly, "Is he fond of her?"

"Well, he writes letters to her," said Mary.

"I wonder what he says," I hazarded.

"I asked him," replied the unabashed Mary, "and he told me he wrote to tell her what a big man he was here, and what a lot of money he makes. . . ."

"Yes? . . ." I added inquiringly.

"I asked him if he sent the money to her, and he said, 'Oh, no—she spend it.' I said, 'Doesn't she want to come here to you?' and he said, 'Yes, but I no want her. She

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She seemed pleased at the idea, and I asked for Ginger that very afternoon.

Ginger, I may tell you, is one of those uncannily human horses that can do almost everything except talk, which is an unmistakable blessing, for I know he would be like a brother of mine who first asks two or three dozen questions straight off and then goes back to the beginning and argues about them all.

But his intuition is marvellous. He knows exactly who is driving him and what he may or may not do. He is so gentle he would not hurt a fly, except to give it a swish, but if anyone does not play the game with him according to his lights, he will suddenly and unexpectedly bite. He likes to live at peace with all the world, and will always do so if the other six horses behave exactly as he thinks they ought. If not—well, they have to be taught. He is the most accommodating horse imaginable about sleeping in any odd hole or corner for the night—but then his chief attitude to life is one that says, "Let me sleep and I won't be any bother at all. It's wanting me to work causes the trouble." Chip has an exaggerated fondness for the "dear old chap," but then he is the one person Ginger never takes liberties with. To see him in the dogcart with Chip you'd say, "What a spanking fine goer that bay is! Have you bought him lately?" To see him anywhere else, with anyone else, you'd say, "Why not send him to a Home of Rest, poor old chap? I'm sure he's served you well for twenty years."

So you can imagine, after Mary had started forth for her first ride on Ginger, I wasn't very surprised to hear the slow tread of hoofs and see her back again in a quarter of an hour.

"What's the matter—don't you like it?" I asked.

"I love it," she declared. "It's splendid, but when we had gone a little way Ginger just turned round and came back."

"But you shouldn't let him," I told her, coming forward and patting the old rogue's neck and keeping my face with difficulty when I caught a glance from his eyes.

"I can't help it," she said. "If I only pull one rein he turns right round, and if I pull both he stops. If I don't do anything he just stands still."

"You must hit him—hard," I urged, and to Ginger I whispered, "You just wait till the Boss comes home! . . ."

"But if I do he might run," said poor Mary, "and I'm not sure if I should stick on."

"Hit him and don't think about it," said I, and sent her off again. She got on better this time—at least, she went a little farther—but nearly with a sorry finish, for Ginger evidently thought he would score last. When nearing the stable she gave him a mild swish. He immediately went off at a good trot, and as Mary was too much occupied holding on to pull the reins, he walked right into his stable with her still on his back, and if she had not had the sense to duck suddenly on to his neck he would have scraped her off ignominiously over his tail.

However, they are good pals now. I am bound to admit, however much Mary suffers from bad memory and dreaming fits, she "has a way with her," which is testified to by the visitors, who seem to like to speed us on our road when we are going out, before leaving themselves. Afterwards we return and find reason to conclude it had to do with the brown eyes of Mary. And now even Ginger goes where she wants him to, and occasionally breaks into quite a creditable pace. I rather fancy her ambition soars towards my pony Pixie. But Pixie has a fancy for fox trots and jazzes and sudden, unexpected flights, and I do not want a limp Mary carried home on a stretcher, so I shall discreetly head her off.

Just now she is feeling a little sorry for herself, because when she walked into the larder the other day she was taken aback to find herself confronted by a dead bullock hanging from the rafter. I don't mean a common or garden bullock in his skin with a noose round his neck, that would have been sufficiently astonishing, but the gruesome figure of a skinned bullock hanging head downwards.

I felt in my bones that Mary's attitude to this particular article in the larder was, "I knew I might find almost any gruesome thing in your larder, m'm, but I had not expected the bloody carcass of a cow," or, "I know I said I would not be particular about what I did, m'm, but really, it is not my work to cope with butchering."

Anyhow, I ignored whatever it was she didn't say and remarked cheerfully, "Oh! that often happens. I remember once a bullock broke its leg and had to be shot, just after we had got a riet buck, and they both had to hang there, and it was hardly possible to get the milk or the butter or

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anything without getting all mixed up with dead carcasses." She said nothing but looked a good deal, and I ran on lightly, "Of course, it's one of the things that make the life so novel. When you get back to stale old England, I expect some day you'll stop short in Regent Street suddenly and say, 'How tame and conventional all this is! Not half so interesting as walking into a larder and finding a dead bullock staring you in the face.'"

"Perhaps," remarked Mary, "but I suppose, if I felt like that, I could go and stand in front of a butcher's shop . . ."

This had not occurred to me, but not to be beaten I rambled on. "Of course, it's really absurd for the guide books and 'Sunny Rhodesia' books to harp all the time on flowers and fruit and gold and sunshine, and leave people supposing they're going to journey straight into Utopia. It would be much better to prepare them a little and mention such things as fleas, and white ants, and . . . and . . . carcasses hanging in the larder . . . and all that . . ."

But the situation became even more delicate later on, because the Man told Mary to see that we had a sirloin for dinner, and Mary didn't know where the sirloin was to be found, and Zandonda (who always says "Yes" to everything) said "Yes," when she pointed to the leg and asked him, "Is this the sirloin?" with the unfortunate result that we had a hard lump of leg for dinner, and Chip, beholding it, began, "What the . . . who the . . . why the . . ." And I had to scowl him down, because I knew Mary was within earshot, and might perhaps appear with a frigid air and give me a month's notice, saying it was not her place to discover sirloins on dead beasts, and she was afraid she was not able to give me satisfaction, etc. etc. But I think it was almost a worse moment still when Chip asked her what she had done with the tongue and the tail?

"Oh, the boys said they always had the offal," she explained . . . But at that I beat a hasty retreat.

Chip isn't half so brave when he's left alone with it. When he burst in upon me he found me deeply engrossed writing the journal to you and Frills.

"What! . . ."

"Don't disturb me just now," I begged sweetly. "I'm writing something special to Frills and the Général."

"What about?" . . . overcome for the moment with curiosity.

"The dead carcass," I murmured, and suddenly he began to laugh and said, "I wish you wouldn't write about such things . . ."

"I wish you wouldn't put such awful things into my larder," I retaliated. "You ought to have a larder of your own! I really didn't think I was marrying into the butchery trade in the misguided moment when I . . ." He wouldn't let me finish, and I'm so sorry about the blot! Tell Frills I loved the books he sent, especially the ones on Spiritualism. I wish I could talk to him on the subject. My own personal belief in it is so simple and natural that controversies have no meaning for me. It has been so always.

I am so confident that those I love, who have passed over, immediately became nearer to me than ever before in some mysterious way, that I can only feel sure I must have had some wonderful experiences in a previous existence that were proofs enough to convince me for all time. I can't stop to write more to-day, but some time I should like to tell you more. When I saw Frills in the 'bus that first time, with his tragedy and his smiling face, I remember thinking to myself, "Devoted spirit-guides are with him always, and he knows it."

(To be continued)



The Romance of Christmas Feasting



By Rowland Grey

SHAKESPEARE was right in a double sense when he insisted that it was impossible

"To cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast."

For if it be certainly useless cruelty merely to prate of good cheer to the starving, there are banquets without money and without price, where all may be welcome guests, and never know satiety. Fortunate indeed is he who can forget even the loneliness—saddest portion for Christmas—and go apleasuring in company where by veritable miracles even the bores are delightful. For, to quote Shakespeare once again: "Epicurean cooks, sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite," and the only question is, which enchanting invitation to accept first.

The Austen Christmas

The Austen Christmas may be spent decorously at Hartfield with the witty, hazel-eyed Emma to do the honours of a dinner at half-past four, for a strictly family party. The little nephews were presumably sent to bed before the snug suppers, which took place about nine with minced chicken and apple tart for the rash, and "Mr. Wood-

house, whose abstemious lip, must thin, but not too thin his gruel sip," struggling between his genuine sense of hospitality and his anxieties over the digestions of his visitors. Mrs. Bennet, of "Pride and Prejudice," kept a good cook famous for soup "fifty times as good as Sir William Lucas," for roasting venison to a turn, and for dressing partridges to perfection. It goes without saying that this artist made a success of the Christmas dinner for which Aunt Gardiner travelled from London with the glad news that long sleeves might at length be worn to cover the frost-nipped elbows of her nieces.

Where Dickens Reigns Supreme

Dickens is king of Christmas in Imagination Street, for even before the "Carol" sent cynics out to buy good cheer and ask their needier neighbours to dine, Mr. Pickwick bade Sam Weller pack up his smartest speckled silk stockings and gadded off to Dingley Dell laden with barrels of oysters. The sternest Pussyfoot need not refuse the cherry brandy offered on arrival, made, be sure, of the juiciest Kentish cherries, or to partake of "the mighty bowl of wassail, something smaller than an ordinary wash-

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house copper, in which the roast apples were hissing and bubbling with a rich look and a jolly sound that were perfectly irresistible." It was no wonder the poor relations drank everybody's health. There was such



"Even a particularly fine mince pie' the Fat Boy was caught devouring was hardly missed"

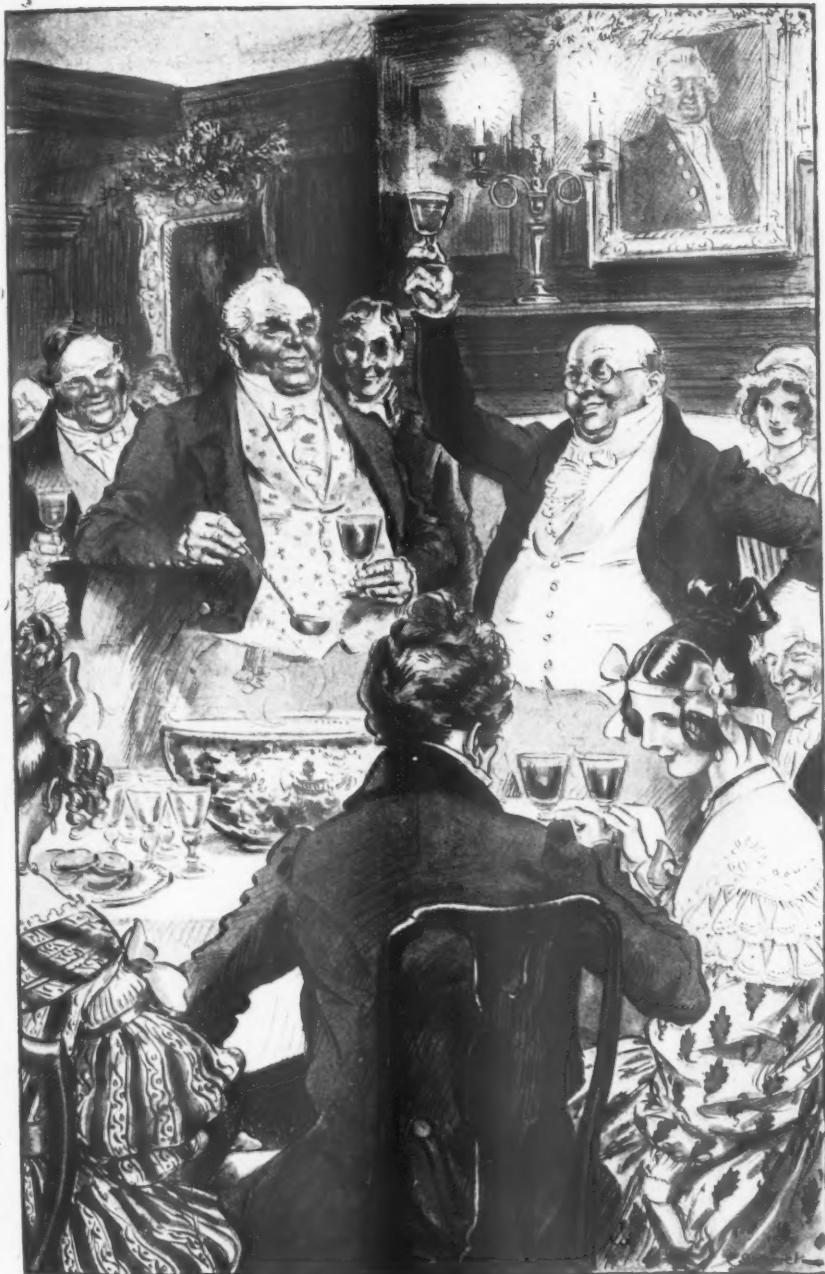
a plenitude of pastry, even "a particularly fine mince pie" the Fat Boy was caught devouring was hardly missed. "Don't he breed nice pork," was his tribute to his hospitable master Mr. Wardle, "as he thought of the roast legs and gravy."

The underlining of a cheerful abundance of savoury meats is indeed essential to an atmosphere of festivity. Without agreeing with the anonymous genius who wrote, "What should we be without our meals? They come to us in our joys and sorrows, and are the most blessed break that dullness can ever know," we may admit that meals in fiction sometimes have undeniable charm. A confirmed dyspeptic might be caught lingering over the description of Scrooge's first vision of the spirit of Christmas Present. "Heaped upon the floor to form a kind of throne were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince pies, plum puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth cakes, and seething bowls of punch that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch there sat a jolly giant glorious to see."

The best of all Christmas dinners, plain though it be, was eaten joyously in the "Carol." "The great piece of cold roast, and the great piece of cold boiled were consumed at good old Fezziwig's rollicking Christmas dance." There, as we know well, he footed it feately in "Sir Roger," after the fiddler, who had tuned "like fifty stomach aches," had been duly primed with foaming pots of porter. For the day itself, it is worth while to journey to a small shabby house in Camden Town where merry hearts make their own sunshine—and ours. All is familiar there, yet it is irresistible to quote to those who have had "beautiful mothers," after the Barrie pattern, who read to them, once upon a time of the Cratchits, and made the golden age more golden still. These go annually to the special repast where "there never was such a goose cooked. Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish), they hadn't ate it all at last! Yet everyone had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits in particular were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows! But now the plates being changed, by Miss Belinda, Mrs. Cratchit left the room alone—too nervous to bear witness—to take the pudding up and bring it in. Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the backyard and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose! All sorts of horrors were supposed!

A "Washing-Day" Pudding

"Hallo! a great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing-day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastry-cook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding! In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered flushed, but smiling proudly, with the pudding like a speckled cannon ball so hard and firm blazing in half a quartern of ignited brandy. . . . Oh, a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so." Could



"The mighty bowl of wassail . . . in which the roast apples were hissing and bubbling, was perfectly irresistible"—p. 135

Drawn by
C. E. Brock

THE QUIVER

Dickens guess there would be enough and to spare for us all to enjoy of this magical dainty that never grows less? We who go to Bob's house and watch the crippled Tiny Tim, in his tiny chair, feel a deep tenderness for this shadow-child, for whose sake ten thousand real Tims have had their tiny birthright of the joy of Christmas from fairy gifts sent in his name.

A Dramatic Feast

Joe Gargery's cottage in "Great Expectations" is another rare place for a Christmas visit, though poor little Pip, compelled to steal a certain precious pork pie by an escaped convict, has a dreadful time of it. "We were to have a superb dinner, consisting of a leg of pickled pork and greens, and a pair of roast stuffed fowls." A handsome mince pie had been made yesterday, and the pudding was on the boil. Pip only got the "scaly tips of drumsticks, and those obscure corners of the parts which the pig when living had least reason to be proud of," but he was too much tormented by his guilty conscience to care. The fatal pie was not missed till full justice had been done to the sweets, when there was an ominous call for "clean plates, cold." One of the guests, Mr. Hubble, was heard to make the startling statement "that a bit of savoury pork pie would lay atop of anything and do no harm." This was naturally not proved by experiment on this occasion, for to the horror of the youthful criminal a smart sergeant and soldiers made a dramatic entry, and Pip believed for one appalling moment they had come to drag him to jail for his sins. Inquiry was made instead for the blacksmith. "And what might you want with him?" asked the sour Mrs. Joe. "Missis," returned the gallant sergeant, "speaking for myself, I

should say the honour of his fine wife's acquaintance; speaking for the King, I answer a little job." Whilst Joe blows up the forge fires and mends handcuffs, not for Pip but for two escaped convicts, that archimpostor Uncle Pumblechook gaily circulates the "bottle of sherry wine and the bottle of port wine" he had just presented to his hostess, and gets all the credit of a hospitality not his. The scene on the sleet-whipped marshes, where Pip and Joe accompany the search party, privately hoping the wretched men may escape, is extraordinarily vivid. The cold and misery are in effectively sharp contrast with the warmth of the snug home of the best blacksmith who ever shod a horse.

It is more surprising, perhaps, to find Christmases equally plentiful in the pages of Thackeray, and far more cosmopolitan. We may go to Virginia "with the trim, quiet ladies working beside the log fires," and take cranberry sauce to our turkey; or we may loiter in Paris with Philip Firmin and his rosy Charlotte at the *pension* where the toughness of poor Madame de Smolensk's "boof" was the cause of grumbling. Or we may fly to Paflagonia, a province of fairyland, to hear all that came of the bewitched rose and ring. The story was written in Rome, to delight a gathering of children, with irresistible rhymes for chapter headings.

"Oh! what fun to have a plum bun,
How I wis' it never was done."

King Valoroso had a provision of eggs and muffins for the royal breakfast the brothers Musgrove might have envied. "Mrs. Peirkins' Ball" in the heyday of the polka was a December gaiety, with the heaviest of sit-down suppers premised by the son of the house with fourteen ices, and by



"A Christmas supper of
woodcocks with 'real
Collares'"

THE ROMANCE OF CHRISTMAS FEASTING

his pal with as many glasses of negus luckily not too potent.

There are two Christmases at Sir Pitt Crawley's, but the immortal Becky is silent regarding the bills of fare. "The cooking was so good it was clear Lady Jane had no hand in it"; we are, however, informed she had once made a pie, a "most abominable pie."

"The Newcomes"—and how many people know that this apt name for a mushroom baronet was borrowed by Thackeray by permission of personal friends?—deals rather sadly with Christmas. One of them is poignantly painful. It is when the noble old Colonel and his son are under the coarse tyranny of Clive's horrible mother-in-law in their honourable poverty. On Boxing Day she counts over the pies—"There were five yesterday"—accusing the hungry servant of theft before the visitors. Thackeray does not spare us one sordid detail. It is sometimes difficult to forgive him his vivisection of the Campaigner, and a relief to adjourn to the English country house of the irresistible Prince de Montcontour. He has come gaily through the financial vicissitudes of the days when he supped on be-sauced *écrevisses* at Baden, oblivious of the fact that "the infamous worms of the Mount of Piety were gnawing his pelisse of true sable." He is a real gentleman of France, and when he calls a toast to his dear friend Colonel Newcome, what can be more exquisitely touching than Madame de Florac and beautiful proud Ethel "touching the wine with pale lips," and dreams of their star-crossed loves "and the past with its dear memories." "Let us who are happy drink to those who are good."

After the moving reconciliation of Lady Castlewood to the wronged Henry Esmond there is a Christmas supper of woodcocks with "real Collares—none of your heady port." It is a pity Thackeray did not give us the menu of the Christmas dinner at Clavering Park, where that supreme culinary artist Mirobolant played the piano to invoke inspiration for such masterpieces as jellies "bland as the smile of beauty," or heart-shaped ices of *lombière* and cherries indicative of his passion for the "blonde miss," the minx Blanche Amery.

Mirobolant would have sneered at the rural feasts reported by George Eliot. He might, however, have reflected that nothing properly made with first-class

materials can be despicable, and that the cheese-cakes of Mrs. Tulliver were light enough to blow away in a draught. Tom and Maggie too may well have appreciated her apricot roll-up, for in a homely way there are few better things. When Christmas arrived "the plum pudding was of the same handsome roundness as usual, and came in with the symbolic flames round it, as if it had been heroically snatched from the nether flames to which it had been thrown by dyspeptic Puritans; the dessert was as splendid as ever, with its golden oranges, brown nuts, and the crystalline light and dark of apple jelly and damson cheese." In all George Eliot's farms it is pleasant to find the poor are generously remembered, and friendly rivalry over dainties secretly compounded from jealously guarded family recipes means a liberal share for all and sundry. The quantities sound legendary to our yesterday of rations, our to-day of scarcity and scanty portions.

One of the countless differences between novelists ancient and modern is the way the latter ignore Christmas as if it were an outworn convention instead of a hallowed



"Gave of their poor best to weary unknown travellers"—
p. 140

THE QUIVER

festival, where the very sweetmeats are symbolical of the costly gifts of the men who were wise. Mr. Hardy, however, though he has lived long enough to know himself a classic, gives Christmas full prominence in more than one of his best books. We smell the frying of the sizzling rashers from well-fed pigs, who never knew America, before the carol singers trudge from house to house on Christmas Eve in the clear starlight. What elaborate entrée would taste half as delicious as a well-browned slice after a frosty walk? Possibly only Wessex folk would fully enjoy the cider from that "little barril beyond compare," cunningly compounded from "the best picked apples, sansoms, stubbards, five-corners and the like." Most of us think cider "very pretty tipple" in summer, but for winter would prefer the final draught piping hot with a trifle of ginger. To the singers urged not to make a scuffle with their boots upon the gravel, bdt to let themselves and the music of "O thou man" come upon their hearers "like a spiritual vision," cider was nectar with all the champagne that ever bubbled.

The Note of Tragedy

There were "lordly junkettings" "far from the madding crowd" at the tragic Christmas time when love-crazed Farmer Boldwood murdered the erring Serjeant Troy. "Great puddens in the milking pails, lumps of fat as big as your thumb." "That the party was intended to be a truly jovial one there was no room for doubt. A large bough of mistletoe had been brought from the woods that day and suspended in the hall of the bachelor's home. Holly and ivy had followed in armfuls, from six that morning till past noon the wood fire in the kitchen roared and sparkled at its highest, the kettle, the saucepan and the three-legged pot appearing in the midst of the flames like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. . . . In spite of all this the spirit of revelry was wanting in the atmosphere of the house . . . the organizing of the whole effort was carried out coldly by hirings, and a shadow seemed to move about the rooms." It is a pity space lacks to quote the wonderful chapter entire where the sudden shot rings out and turns the dance to wild confusion.

To some whose homes are haunted for ever by the gallant presence of the "lads who will never grow old" asleep in France, Christmas with our nearest allies makes a

special appeal. Let them go with tender-hearted du Maurier to that most famous studio where lovely Trilby darned the socks of "Les Trois Anglîches" and waited upon them and their friends Zouzou, Dodor et Cie. No better company can be found in all fiction; nay, in fact, when at the last moment the anxiously awaited hamper from England arrived, "Everyone was pressed into the preparations for the banquet. Sausages to be fried for the turkey, stuffing made, and sauces, salads mixed, and punch, holly hung in festoons all around and about—a thousand things. Everybody was so clever and good-humoured that nobody got in anybody's way. . . . the cooking of the dinner was almost better fun than the eating of it. And though there were so many cooks, not even the broth was spoiled—cockaleekie from a receipt of the Laird's."

Certainly "Trilby"—book of excellent beauties—was a real factor in the *entente cordiale*; certainly du Maurier may lay claim to have kept the second-best Christmas of fancy. Like Dickens, he does not let us forget the sublime mystery underlying it. Memorable is the picture of the midnight Mass at the Madeleine with glorious voices proclaiming the eternal truth—"Noël, Noël, Voici le Rédempteur," "till the whole universe seemed to shake with the rolling music of that great message of love and forgiveness."

The Tommy's Christmas

And a living ally touches exquisitely upon the inward and spiritual grace underlying the Christmas radiance. For Monsieur Cammaerts tells us with Biblical simplicity how soldiers in Flanders gave of their poor best to weary unknown travellers, a woman on an ass with a new-born child in her arms, and an old man; and how they heard a far-away melody high above them singing of peace and goodwill to the sound of the booming guns. Another poet, American Lowell, sums up the conclusion of the whole matter of Christmas feasting in his "Vision of Sir Launfae":

"Not what we give but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare."

Our great romance writers have given us Christmases of infinite variety, worthy of more than one slight note of grateful admiration.



SK your draper to show you the
famous Hercules garments —
They wash well, wear well
and the colours are fast —

Hercules Overalls for Women and Frocks for the Youngsters



Manufacturers of "Hercules," JOSHUA HOYLE & SONS, Ltd., Spinners and Manufacturers, MANCHESTER.



"Now are we all here? Mother, Joan, Doris, Jack, Bobbie, Turkey and
Colman's Mustard. Then let the feast begin."

King's Evidence

A Story of Christmas, 1700
By
Violet M. Methley

OUT of the misty whiteness of the winter night came the whisper of the hidden sea, rising and falling. To landward a ridge of sandhills showed vaguely against the skyline: all shapes, all outlines were blurred, indefinite.

Suddenly a figure seemed to materialize from the mist, moving soundlessly over the snow; as suddenly a darker shape came up from the bush.

And then, with a little, joyful cry, the misty spectre became a living woman, clinging to the fur-coated man.

"Sven! Sven! Oh, the happiness of seeing you again! Although I cannot see you—can scarcely even be sure that it is you!"

"In spite of *this*, dear heart!" The man's lips sought for the face under the furred hood.

"Ah! but I never really doubted," the girl laughed, softly, happily.

For a few moments there was silence; then she spoke again.

"But why are you here, Sven—and how did you come?"

"I cannot tell you anything, Natasha—except that I love you."

"And that is such an old story—as old as that spring day, two years ago, when you first landed here in Russia! You have not come over from Sweden, just to tell me that, Sven?"

"No; I'm here on other business. But I asked you to meet me here for a purpose, Natasha. I want you to promise me to stay close in your cottage, there on the sandhills, for the present—not to wander away, not to go into Narva."

"But—why?"

"I can't tell you why—and you must neither ask questions nor answer them, unless you would risk my life, Natasha. Remember that I am a soldier—and a Swedish soldier."

"Ah, yes—and my Russia is at war with your Sweden. Strange, Sven, that 'my' and 'your' should not be the same! But it makes no difference."

"No, it makes no difference, beloved. But—promise what I ask."

"I do not quite understand."

"God forbid that you should!" Sven Stronso laughed grimly under his breath. "Natashka, you must trust me without knowing anything. I cannot ask more of your love than that—or less."

"No, that is true," Natashka said gravely. "I promise—and I will try to be worthy of your trust, dear."

Her face was very sweet and serious in the dim snow-light, and suddenly Stronso caught her close to him.

"Heaven keep you safe, my very dearest," he whispered. "I must go now without delay."

"Sven," there was sudden dread in her voice, "I am—afraid. There is danger—is it not so?—for you."

"No more than always for a soldier—that is all, beloved. Farewell—and remember your promise."

"Farewell." The girl whispered the word lingeringly, as she moved away very slowly through the snow-covered sandhills. Her thoughts were so filled with Sven's figure that she did not see a larger, bulkier shape, which slipped out from the mist and dogged her footsteps as she walked along, with head bent.

She did not see it, until of a sudden that shape was close beside her, one strong hand gripping her arm, the other pressed roughly over her lips.

"Be silent!" a hoarse voice muttered in Russian, and the girl felt herself dragged along inexorably, until they were far out of sight and sound of Sven Stronso. Then, and not until then, Natashka was roughly released and flung down upon her knees in the snow, whilst her captor stooped over her, huge, bearlike.

"And what is it that you—a Russian girl!—had to say to a soldier of Sweden?" he growled.

In the dim light Natashka could see plainly enough that the man wore the nondescript uniform, the long, belted coat and



"What is it that you—a Russian girl!—had to say to a soldier of Sweden?" —p. 141

Drawn by
Frank Gillett

fur cap of the Russian army, whilst his face was hidden by a shaggy fair beard.

"I spoke to him because he is my friend—for no other reason," the girl answered quietly.

"And what did you tell this friend of yours?"

"Nothing."

"You lie—spy that you are! I'll swear that you have Swedish gold at this moment in your pocket, given you in payment for information about our army—our preparations for defence."

"I know nothing about these things; and, if I did, I should tell nothing—to the enemy."

"Oh, no! Not to the enemy—only to your friend—eh? But I'll tell you how you can prove your patriotism—show that you are a true Russian and no traitor."

"How is that?"

"By telling me what he told you about the accursed Swedes and their movements!" The man had fallen on his knees beside her. He spoke in a guttural whisper, crouching low. "Come—I'm a spy of a different sort, and I glory in it! I am out

to seek information for our army. Prove your good faith by giving me what I need."

"He told me nothing—nothing at all."

"Do you expect me to believe that?"

"It is the truth."

"See here—I can pay for my information. You shall not be stinted for money. You shall be paid for your patriotism—if you tell me what you know!"

"But that is nothing!"

The Russian snarled under his breath, very evilly. He made a swift movement, and the girl saw the cold glitter of a knife.

"If you do not tell me all you have heard—this shall persuade you!" he muttered.

Natashka felt the sharp point penetrating her fur-lined coat, touching her skin, and she gave a little involuntary sob. After all, she was only a girl—and life had become very dear to her since that spring day, when the young Swedish sailor had first met her upon the beach. It would be so easy to invent something to stave off death—to pretend to knowledge, to tell of Sven's warning words, and fill them with meaning, to give the spy information of some kind, false or no.

KING'S EVIDENCE

It would be very easy—but it would make Sven seem a vile traitor, and that she could not do, to save her own life.

"I can tell you—nothing!" she gasped, and waited for death.

And then, even at the moment when it seemed so very near, the wing of the dark angel was lifted.

The Russian started, glanced up, and peered into the darkness with a muttered curse. Springing up, he thrust the knife into his belt, and vanished, like a cumbersome shadow, into the mist.

Scarcely had he disappeared, when the reason for his swift departure became abundantly evident. Over the curve of the sand-hills came running half a dozen Swedish soldiers, dragging amongst them Sven Stronso, his arms bound behind him with the belt of his uniform, his face flushed with anger and shame.

Natashka stumbled to her feet and stood, dazed and bewildered, in the snow-crusted sand, as the men surrounded her, talking quickly and excitedly.

"Here she is—here's the woman who was talking to Stronso a few minutes ago—and she went straight from him to the Russian, the Russian soldier who was here just now, who ran away when he saw us coming. . . . She's a Russian, of course, herself. . . . And we've caught her in the very act of betraying us, Sergeant!"

"She will assure you that I told her nothing of our movements—nothing at all!" Sven Stronso's voice was hoarse with misery. "I am no traitor—I was only speaking to her of—of other things."

"You ask us to believe that—when she goes straight off to repeat these other things to a Russian soldier?" The Swedish sergeant sneered. "You're a fool, Stronso—a dupe, doubtless—but fools are as dangerous as knaves in war time—more dangerous, perhaps! And what you've revealed in your doting folly may well mean the destruction of the Swedish army."

"But I tell you I have revealed nothing—nothing!" the young man protested desperately.

"So you say. We will see what a court-martial makes of your story. Come, comrades, this is too big a matter for us. We must take them both to the camp."

"The girl too?"

"Aye—the girl too. At the very least, we must see to it that she talks to no more Russian soldiers, and at the very worst—

well, the same wall will serve for both—or the same rope."

A little sob of agony broke from Sven Stronso.

"Oh, God, Natashka, that I should have dragged you into this!" he groaned.

"I am glad to be here with you," the girl answered quietly. "And, since we are both innocent, they cannot surely prove us guilty."

But Sven was silent, knowing more of war than did the girl he loved.

"Bandage the girl's eyes," the sergeant said gruffly. "And tie her hands. She must not see where we take her."

One of the soldiers obeyed, and afterwards, taking Natashka by the arm, guided her roughly along. For a long time, as it seemed to her, they made their way along the beach, with the sea whispering on their right, then presently reached a place where she was conscious of great crowds of people, of men's voices, and the trampling of horses, and the lights of great fires seen vaguely through the bandage which covered her eyes.

Presently came a curt order.

"Stoop!" And, bending obediently, Natashka felt the rough scraping of a canvas tent-flap against her cheek.

Within, she was guided to a box, and sat there, waiting, in the chill dampness of the tent, for a long time.

She knew that she was alone, yet knew also that a sentry was posted just outside, for she heard his heavy-booted footsteps passing and re-passing. Presently he, or some other soldier, entered, and bade her, roughly, to get up and come with him.

Dully, mechanically, Natashka felt herself led for a short distance, until both she and her conductor were brought to a standstill by a sharp challenge. After a few moments of parley, the same voice ordered them to pass within, and the girl knew that they had entered another tent, larger, more spacious.

Even as she vaguely realized that fact, her arms were unbound, the handkerchief removed from her eyes, and she found herself standing before a group of half a dozen men seated round a low camp table, on boxes or piles of saddlery.

The sergeant who had arrested them stood on one side of her, and on the other, Sven, still flushed with misery and shame, more guilty-seeming in his innocence than many a brazen traitor and liar.

THE QUIVER

The men seated round the improvised council-table were mostly elderly, hard-bitten soldiers, dressed in the buff-coats, the huge boots, and the heavy breast-plates of the fighters of that year of grace, 1700. But Natashka's eyes turned, almost involuntarily, towards the man who sat immediately facing her, leaning forward, with steady, impelling, yet repellent blue eyes fixed upon her face.

He was very young—a mere lad of eighteen—yet in spite of his completely beardless fair face and thick flaxen-gold hair, one could scarcely call him boyish. There was a power amounting almost to pitilessness in the massive jaw, in the heavy, handsome features, which belonged to maturity.

This man was dressed with an utter disregard of display or fashion. His buff-coat was greasy, the scarf at his throat dirty and stained, his buttons tarnished, his boots and gloves of rough, untanned sheepskin.

Seated as he was, it was easy to divine that he was of unusual height and unusual strength; and he remained completely silent, whilst the other officers questioned, re-questioned, and cross-questioned the sergeant, Sven, and Natashka herself.

Natashka listened and answered in a half-dazed fashion. She could scarcely, even now, realize that all these words were leading up to one thing—a shameful death. It seemed impossible—ridiculous. But—Sven, too, was in danger: that came home to her, stabbed her back to full consciousness. Suddenly she spoke—and spoke directly to that single, silent figure.

"Sir—we are both innocent—quite innocent! There was no question of treason—or betrayal. Our only fault is—that we love."

"Can you prove this?" The voice was oddly unexpected: the gruff, half-broken voice of a boy.

Natashka hesitated, then answered simply:

"No, sir. How is that possible?"

"You can bring no witness?"

"No. There was the Russian soldier to whom I spoke—he was a spy. He said so—but I told him nothing."

"He tried to make you speak? He asked you?"

"Yes. But I would not do it—and I could not."

"You cannot prove that."

"No," Natashka answered wearily.

"You saw this spy—this Russian?" The young man addressed the sergeant curtly.

"Yes, sir; but he escaped us. We could not catch him."

"A pity! His evidence—for or against them—would have been decisive. A pity that these two should die for want of that evidence! Yet—we can't afford to let them live. . . . Surprise is everything. Well—what do you say, Linders?"

"I say that they must die, Your Majesty!" The burly soldier addressed spoke with a queer mixture of impatience with the speech and obsequiousness towards the speaker.

And Natashka stared in amazement, as she realized the truth, that this lad was the King of Sweden—that Charles XII. who, within a few days, at the Christmas time of 1700, was to prove himself a master strategist by the lightning surprise of Narva—who, before he was nineteen, was to be acclaimed as the most skilled and forceful leader of armies in Europe.

Into her bewildered thoughts broke Sven's voice, hoarse and broken with wretchedness.

"Your Majesty—shoot me—hang me, if you will, and if you believe me a traitor. But spare her . . . she is absolutely innocent—absolutely truthful!"

"You are prejudiced!" The cold scepticism of the young king's tone was very unboyish. "Your word where the woman is concerned is scarcely trustworthy."

"For God's sake, sire—let her go free!"

"To betray more of our secrets—more of our plans!"

"Then—keep her a prisoner until those plans are accomplished."

"With no punishment for the vile treachery which would make a man, in the dote of love, betray his country?"

"By gad, you should not speak thus of her if I were free!" Sven's face was white with anger, as he strained at the strap which held him.

"Indeed! Loose his arms, Sergeant. . . . Now, my man, what have you to say, or do to me?"

But Sven stood in miserable silence.

"I had forgotten. . . . You are the King," he muttered.

"Forget it again! But I wonder if you would find it so easy a matter to give me a thrashing. I am bigger than you—stronger, too, I fancy. I have a mind to try."

"Your Majesty—this is mere foolish-



"' You had best marry her at once—and make
her a good Swedish subject,' he said"—p. 146

Drawn by
Frank Ollillet

THE QUIVER

ness!" General Linders spoke almost angrily.

"Twill take but a few minutes—and I've lacked exercise of late. Give me a thrashing, Corporal Stronso, if you can . . . and, if you can, I'll spare the life of the wench there!"

The promise was thrown carelessly over his shoulder, as an afterthought, as Charles stripped off his breastplate and buff-coat, appearing in a shirt which was indifferently clean, but which showed the wonderful lines of his muscular arms and shoulders.

As he turned towards Sven there was a cold light in his steel-blue eyes, a cold smile on his well-cut mouth: he moved slowly, deliberately.

But on Sven Stronso's forehead and cheeks the sweat stood in great drops. He was desperately excited, desperately nervous—and, thus, desperately at the mercy of his cool opponent. He flung himself at the tall, young king in a fury; but from the first it was plain to the onlookers, experienced fighters nearly all, that the older man was at a complete disadvantage.

It mattered too much to Sven: the fact that he was fighting for Natasha's very life prevented him from using his reason, his brain. It all passed very quickly: locked together, the two men swayed backwards and forwards, slipping on the trampled mud of the tent floor. Then Charles saw his chance—and took it. With a mighty effort, he wrenched Sven from his feet, flung him down, stunned, half senseless, and stood panting, but perfectly cool still.

"I thought I could do it," he said reflectively; "but one cannot be sure without trying."

"Oh—you are cruel, cruel!" Natasha blazed out into fury, as she knelt beside Sven and raised his head on to her shoulder. "You played with him, mocked at him—you are more merciless than death itself!"

Sven Stronso drew himself from her

arms, stumbled to his feet, and stood there, sullen, shamed. The King eyed him thoughtfully.

"You fought well—but not well enough," he said. "So that chance has failed. . . . Nothing can save you now except the evidence of the Russian spy."

"And 'tis idle to speak of that, Your Majesty," Linders interrupted somewhat impatiently.

"Why . . . perhaps not so useless as you think?" The King paused, yawned, and added carelessly, "Since I am he!"

"*You!*" Linders gave voice to the amazement of all the little group.

The King nodded coolly, turning down his shirt-sleeves.

"Yes. I was the spy. I have always found it best—and safest—to do one's own dirty work. And so it happens that I can give you my evidence, sirs—that I can assure you, this girl betrayed no secrets to the enemy, in my person—nay, she refused to do so, most fiercely and emphatically. So there's nothing more to be said, is there?"

The officers departed, the sergeant saluted and withdrew; only Sven and Natasha remained, still dazed and half-bewildered at the sudden turn of events.

The King, seated once more upon the heap of saddles and horse-furniture, glanced at them keenly.

"You had best marry her at once—and make her a good Swedish subject," he said. "That is the safest plan."

"Your Majesty—I cannot thank you—for everything you have done," Sven spoke earnestly. "I can only wish you the same happiness that Natasha and I feel now—but there is no better thing on earth!"

"I wonder! . . . You almost make me want to know that happiness"—a strange look crossed the stern face of the boy-king, and suddenly he shook his head—"but I never shall, except as I see it in others," said Charles XII. gravely, and prophetically.



Christmas— Double Twenty

*A Forecast
By
Frank Elias*

WHAT will be the character of Christmas 2020—or Christmas Double Twenty as we suppose the telephone girl will call it, if indeed by that time the automatic exchange will not have banished the charming young ladies who, when we want Holborn 456, so carefully and with such eager enthusiasm put us through to Bank 654?

It is easy and natural to cultivate fantastic visions of that Christmas a hundred years away. And the exercise is pleasant enough to tempt one. But before doing so let us consider some characteristics of 2020 which should undoubtedly be present, and to hope for which is to put no strain on one's anticipatory sense.

Is it too much to dare to hope that men and women living then will, at that festival of peace and goodwill, be able to look back over a century in which the quarrels of the nations were settled by means of an instrument, at this moment in course of being forged, if forged in a fire of enthusiasm which needs constant watching to keep it aflame?

Is it too much to hope that these people who will take our place will be able to look back and thank the Europe of the early twentieth century that, first by creating—which it has done—and then by establishing—which it has not yet done completely—the authority of the League of Nations, they have nothing to fear at Christmas time—no shadow across their homes, no thought that their young men are dying in the trenches, no sense that the economic pressure which follows immediately upon war means an empty larder and the denial to the children of those delicacies and delights without which the natural side of Christmas would be only half a feast?

We have peace to-day, we of 1920, even if Europe has it not wholly. But it will be something more than such a peace as we know, that boon that should be theirs, the boon of being able to look back over a hundred years of freedom from the bitter curse of war.

But if one is justified in hoping that we as a people will have achieved the supreme act of intelligence which would be implied by our refusal to tolerate war, may one not anticipate that something will have been done by a sure if slow development of the political consciousness, so that by that Christmas still a hundred years away we shall simply not tolerate the inconveniences and the extortions which now we suffer so cheerfully and so stupidly? The Double Twenty people will go shopping in preparation for the approaching season of jollity. But they will have no fear of being the victims of the profiteer: they will travel



"I hear their engines; they'll be descending in a minute," he calls out to the old lady waiting within"—p. 148

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into the country for Christmas parties; but they will not permit themselves to be sufferers either through the greed or the ineptitude of the carrying companies. For, long before *their* time—as we may hope—we shall have abolished political labels and will have grasped the fact that we can be masters in our own house if we choose. If, for instance, the price of our Christmas goose or the materials for our pudding rise to the extortion pitch as the season draws near, no longer will housewives submit and decide that “the children must go without.” It will be the extortioners who will go without. The nation will give its orders to its legislators, and the nation will be obeyed. And whether it complains of food profiteers or of public services that are expensive and inconvenient the country will not be content to look on stupidly; it will act. We shall hear very little about political parties; we shall then begin to use Parliament as the instrument of our own will.

Short Trips, Long Distances

As we consider in imagination the journeys into the country for those charming old-fashioned Christmas parties for which our successors will find themselves just as eager as we, our mind ranges almost as widely as the means by which Mr. and Mrs. Double Twenty and the little Double Twenties will take their cheerful passage. With aircraft doing easily two hundred and fifty miles to the hour even the nearer suburbs of London will be scattered along the sea coast. The aeroplane will have its competitor in the swift petrol launch—which even now can reach nearly ninety miles an hour and which by then should do its 100-150. With our rivers and canals open to this traffic a new and delightful means of travel will offer to us all. Then there will be the special cross-country motor roads on which the new cars, with their power of rising into the air when required, will be free to attain enormous speeds. So that a “short journey” into the country for Christmas will not merely be a run to the Home Counties or even to the Midlands. The Double Twenties will be able to contemplate a journey to Penzance or the North of Scotland and yet not think of setting out until Mr. Double Twenty has got home from the office on Christmas Eve. By starting from London at two they would be at their destination in Scotland in good time for five o’clock tea.

But for this particular Christmas the Double Twenties may have decided that they will go farther afield. They may feel the need of sunshine, and so take a run across to the Riviera; they may feel the call of Italy or feel the compelling charm of Algiers. All these will be within safe and easy reach, and Double Twenty will still be able to walk up Threadneedle Street again at ten o’clock on the 27th. Expense? Mr. Double Twenty will catch the air omnibus—twenty miles for a penny—Bank, Liverpool Street, and Gare de Lyon, or Oxford Circus and Rome; or Piccadilly, Sloane Street, and North Africa. Mr. Double Twenty shall decide his route and not we.

By Private 'Plane

But it is more than likely that the Double Twenties will own their own 'plane, which will by then be built on a standardized principle so simple as to make wonderfully for cheapness; and so, however humble their circumstances, they will be able to run over to see the old people in Cornwall or John o’ Groat’s. About them as they go perhaps the snow will be falling; below them they will see dimly a white carpet, the character of which at least has not changed in a hundred or two thousand years, a carpet that, if we are sentimental, must always appear to be the appropriate one over which to approach the particular home in which our Christmas happiness centres.

The old man far away in the country stands at the door in the darkness waiting and listening. And it is not “I hear their wheels,” but “I hear their engines; they’ll be descending in a minute,” that he calls out to the old lady waiting within. The welcome that follows shows small difference from that which would signal the arrival of children and grandchildren to-day; it is just as warm, just as boisterous, and there is the same gathering within the warmth of a glowing house—even if one does notice an improved heating system which yet doesn’t exclude the cheerfulness and comfort of a wide red grate of flaming coals.

The Christmas cookery of the Double Twenties should deprive the cook of to-day of all breath and power of expression. In the first place, one wonders whether the present queen of the kitchen would recognize her successor in the quick, neat-handed young woman with her educated accent and her double row of certificates who, in her little fifty h.p. two-seater, flies round to

CHRISTMAS—DOUBLE TWENTY

twenty houses in different corners of the town, and after a few deft operations with the highly ingenious machinery which she finds in each kitchen goes on to the next client, leaving her last one contemplating a row of such plum puddings as even we do not see, and a turkey done to such a turn as to make us almost believe that it would enjoy seeing itself on its dish.

As for the servants whom we still retain on our premises, for them Christmas festivities will spell pure enjoyment—an enjoyment no longer overshadowed by the thought that there is a great deal of cleaning, and washing-up, and putting to rights involved for someone when the present gaieties are over-past. The work of the household will be reduced to a minimum; and if there has been invented—as there will have been—some appliance for washing every pot and pan between two ticks of the clock and putting the things up clean and dry, and Mary Jane hasn't got it in her kitchen—why, you of the future will know what to give her for her Christmas present.

But not only in the matter of locomotion and cookery will science come to our aid at Christmas. Personally, one rather welcomes the waits as they are to-day. They give familiar character if not melody to the festival. But there are many folks who don't like them at all. If the Double Twenties have *their* objections to the ordinary waits, however, they will be able to avail themselves of a means of enjoying the forms of carol singing, the character of which has lately been suggested to us by the enterprise of the *Daily Mail*. Not long ago, at the behest of that journal, Madame Melba sang into a wireless telephone and was heard over a radius of a thousand miles. In scarcely more than a year or two there should be considerable developments of this charming method of utilizing Marconi's wonderful discovery; a hundred years hence we may therefore expect each of our successors to have his own private wireless installation, and at Christmas time in 2020 it

will not be merely to local waits that we shall be listening, but to the sweetest and most thrilling voices in the world as they remind us again of what happened when shepherds watched their flocks by night.

Mention of such an installation brings us



"Doubtless it will be in the form of films
that our Christmas cards will be made"

to the Christmas presents of 2020. A wireless set should be a highly popular gift unless before that time such provision for one's needs be included in the conveniences of our house, with the water supply and the lighting. It is to be feared that the girl infant of the future will look rather coldly upon the dolls which cheered her great-grandmother (a lady at present, by the way, in the nursery). She, that child unborn, will have grown accustomed to playthings of such astonishing mechanical ingenuity that she will turn up her nose at dolls that will not walk by electricity and talk by means of the tiny gramophone which has lodgment in her stomach. While Tommy Double Twenty will not thank you for a picture book when you could as easily and

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cheaply give him a new film or two for his nursery cinema.

Doubtless it will be in the form of films that our Christmas cards will be made. We shall not see a mere stationary scene—a picture of a little throng crossing a snow-covered path towards an ancient church—but we shall have in our hand, when the aerial post arrives, the means, in film form, of seeing people we know and love hurrying towards a church that also we know and love, and presently entering at the door and disappearing, the picture being taken perhaps at Christmas 2019 to be ready for the next anniversary of the festival.

Abolition of Christmas Boxes

Christmas is a time for giving. But in 2020 it will not be a time for giving Christmas boxes. By then the working classes will have come to have the same attitude towards gratuities as the middle and upper classes have now. Of something of the kind we already have evidence in the refusal of many London postmen to accept Christmas boxes. A hundred years hence the worker will be not only a very highly paid person, but will consider it beneath his dignity to receive for services rendered anything more than the sum agreed between his employer and himself when they made the bargain. We must prepare ourselves for a greater dignity, a certain aloofness in the man who serves us in various ways, just as we may have to witness the end of certain rather pleasant features of the old relationship.

And will nobody survive in the land to defend the old things, to uphold the preservation of custom, respect for the old-fashioned Christmas? Probably there will be many such people, just as to-day there are voices lamenting the "good old times," and just as, in Norman William's court, there were ancient men who whispered mournfully of the glorious Christmases that one used to have in the dear old Saxon days.

But if we are natural men and women we march with our times. Restorations of the past are poor dead things. Life—lives! What science offers we must take; we must not hide in a napkin even the talents of other men. We must live in our period, breathe its atmosphere. And the Double Twenties—bless their unborn heads!—must shock us by their novelties and by their contempt for what we account novelties to-day, just as we shock our surviving grand-

sires by our passion for speed and labour-saving.

The Essential Christmas

But, after all, the changes which we imagine afford only the superficial aspects of the great festival. Essentially all Christmases have their origin in one Christmas—the first—to which all others are a glance back. If we try to live in the future for a moment studying the lives of those far-away Double Twenties, we only come up against the reminder that we must look back as they, the Double Twenties, must look back. For their eyes no less than ears must be fastened upon "one far off divine intent" showing itself in a manger in Bethlehem. We may look up, marvelling at the wonders that fly across the night sky; but what wonder, that we or they who come after us may fashion, compares with the wonder of the star that was seen of the wise men and that led their march to the shrine of the World's Saviour? The very gifts which we contrive and that charm and light up our imaginations by their ingenuity are but symbols of those first gifts which were carried by the Magi two thousand years ago.

And so we surrender the idea that Christmas can ever change, save in this, that it may become, with the passage of time, a season characterized by a truer approximation to those ideals which were then exalted before the world and that proclaimed it a festival of peace, goodwill to all men.

Aircraft may fill the skies above our heads and flying boats fill the waters of the earth, and yet each one of the coming generation will still be able to declare that—

"I saw three ships come sailing in,
Come sailing in,
Come sailing in.

I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas Day in the morning.

"Pray whither sailed these ships all three,
On Christmas Day,
On Christmas Day?

Pray whither sailed these ships all three
On Christmas Day in the morning?

"O they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas Day,
On Christmas Day.

O they sailed into Bethlehem
On Christmas Day in the morning.

"And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas Day,
On Christmas Day.

And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas Day in the morning."

New Serial Story

GEORGE STRACHAN'S HEIRS

by
Mrs Baillie Reynolds

(Author of "A Castle to Let," "The Woman Who Pays," etc. etc.)

SYNOPSIS OF OPENING CHAPTERS

GEORGE STRACHAN, a Canadian millionaire, has taken the opportunity of the close of the war to visit England. A widower and childless, he is anxious to meet his nearest relatives, the Cranstoun-Browns. Frankly, he wants to find out if they are worthy of becoming his heirs.

At the hotel at which he first meets them he makes the acquaintance of a "Miss Garth," a typist who has met with a slight accident on the hotel staircase. He takes her home in a taxi, and later suggests that she become his secretary and accompany him on a visit to the Cranstoun-Browns.

Phyllis and Vee—Mr. Cranstoun-Brown's daughters—hardly know what to make of the new secretary when the guests arrive at "Redmays." Gilbert—the son—is certainly impressed.

CHAPTER VII

The Cranstoun-Browns en Famille

THE young man's evening shoes made no sound to reveal his presence. Closing the door behind him, he remained motionless, staring at the stranger on his hearth.

As he contemplated her she smiled suddenly at her own thoughts. Such a smile! Such a wonderful mouth, full of meanings!

The firelight gilded the delicate outline of her bare arms, and he caught sight of a black bandage round one of them. This, then, must be the secretary—the object of his mother's dark suspicions. Gilbert could afterwards remember quite clearly that his first emotion on beholding her was a fear lest Mrs. Cranstoun-Brown might say or do anything offensive.

Why this possibility should present itself to him as intolerable he could not have said, and had not time for reflection, for Miss Garth looked up and saw him. She made no movement to rise, but looked

at him expectantly, and he came forward awkwardly.

"I'm afraid I'm intruding. My people never told me this room would be in use," he said.

She rose then and gave him her hand, smiling. "Are we turning you out? What a shame! But, you see, we must have somewhere to work. It takes at least a couple of hours a day to keep down the correspondence."

"I see," he said slowly, going to gaze upon her machine. "You have hurt your hand. How can you manage to type?" he asked with real curiosity.

"I have only just begun to use it again. My sprain is practically well now."

He made a comment upon the make of her typewriter, and she left her place beside the fire to answer his questions, laying upon the well-kept keys a hand and wrist which seemed made of a different flesh and blood from that of Phyllis or Vee.

"I suppose," she remarked, "that you are Mr. Cranstoun-Brown, junior, and that you slipped in here for a quiet cigarette before dinner. Do smoke, in spite of my intrusion, won't you?"

"Oh, no; I'd better go. Clumsy of me to blow in like that."

"If you go I shall feel uncomfortable. I am merely waiting in idleness for the gong to sound, and gloating in the luxury of this fire."

"All right, if you will, too." He went to a cupboard and got out a box of dainty Egyptians. "These are my ladies' brand,"

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said he. "At least, they are what Sheila Varick likes."

He brought the box, and she took one naturally. "Who is Sheila Varick?" she asked.

"She's one of these pitiful war widows," said Gilbert, seating himself opposite to Miss Garth at the fireside. "Her brother, Major Doran, and I were Territorial officers in the same battalion when war broke out. One leave he brought home Tommy Varick, who fell head over ears in love with Sheila. Next leave they were married, and had eight days' honeymoon; and—and—Tommy Varick never had another leave after that."

"Poor girl!"

"Yes. I think it all seems to her rather like a dream now. There was something quite unlike real life about that kind of wedding—that snatching of a few days' happiness out of death's jaws. But I don't think it broke her heart, you know. It was all over so quickly—she knew so little of him, really. . . . The Dorans are about the only people worth knowing hereabouts," he added, after a pause, during which he watched with earnest gaze the turn of Miss Garth's wrist as she held her cigarette.

She received his confidence with interest, tinged with a guess that Gilbert would welcome Mrs. Varick's inconstancy; and with George Strachan's interests in mind, she studied the heavy-faced young man rather narrowly.

"When you came in," said she presently, "I was thinking how beautiful the quiet is here. I have been living near Vauxhall for the past six months, and this is sudden peace. I—I don't think I expected to find Streatham such a pleasant place."

"Oh, it's all right when you get here," conceded the young man morosely. "Personally I should prefer Vauxhall. One is close to the hub of things there."

"Yes, that's true," she replied ponderingly. "Why don't you live in town?"

He shrugged. "My people wouldn't like it," he answered shortly. "A man has to take his sisters about, and so on."

"That's considerate," she said approvingly. "Mr. Strachan would admire that trait in you."

"What kind is Strachan? Very old-fashioned—what?"

"Do you want me to describe him?" said the girl softly. "Well, he is a knight of old, born by accident into the world of to-day. I could point you to some lines

of Wordsworth that hit him off pretty neatly; but I won't. I leave you to find out for yourself. There's always a pleasure in discovery, isn't there?"

"Sometimes," he replied, with meaning.

"It must have seemed rather weak of me," she subjoined after a pause, "asking you if you were Mr. Cranstoun-Brown. But I really did not feel sure. You are not a bit like your sisters."

"So Mrs. Varick says."

"Your sister Veronica is evidently a Strachan," went on Miss Garth. "She has her uncle's long, oval face and slightly aquiline nose, with those dark eyes; only hers are not so melting as his. But when she smiles she is very like him."

"Is that so?" said Gilbert mechanically. He hardly heard what was said, his whole attention being focused upon the speaker.

The secretary laughed softly. "There! Now I have bored you—and that in the first ten minutes of our acquaintance! I know that some men hate the subject of family likeness."

He made polite protests, but rather with the air of one whose manners moved on rusty springs, not often in use. He had a decided likeness to his mother, and with her massive jaw had inherited her small eyes. His, however, were not set close together, as were hers; and they were blue-grey in colour, not boot buttons, as Charis Garth had in her thoughts irreverently described the lady's.

The room was very quiet. The curtains had not been drawn, and a slim crescent moon hung over the distant roofs of the houses in the next road. It was hardly twilight, but just enough of day was gone to make the firelight show up on the side of the room away from the window. It illumined the lines of Miss Garth's slim form, painting it in gilded edges, like a Rembrandt. The coals sank together with a soft, crushy noise, and the cat on the rug purred as the girl's slippered foot caressed him. It was so comfortable that they almost forgot to talk; and when the gong for which they had been listening sounded, they started, looked at each other, and smiled. It is permissible to wonder which of the two would have been more surprised, could the thoughts of the other have been made known.

They descended the stairs side by side, just as the rest of the family issued from the drawing-room on its way to dinner.



"Miss Garth declared that she neither played nor sang, so Phyl and Vee got their chance without rivalry"—p. 154

Drawn by
J. Dewar Mills

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There was a savoury smell of soup in the air, and Mrs. Cranstoun-Brown wore a look of satisfaction, for the visit had begun well, with the sole exception that Gilbert had not as yet appeared.

As she glanced up and saw him and the secretary side by side coming calmly downstairs, she experienced a mild shock. Her boy! She had previously supposed the secretary to be setting her cap at the millionaire himself; but here was another and an unwelcome possibility!

"Ah, here is Gil," said her little husband, in tones of satisfaction. "Come and be introduced, my boy. I thought you had not come in."

"Phyl knew I was in," was the rather curt response.

George Strachan grasped his hand, and thought with regret that the young man was too like Clara to be lovable. However, he made his greeting as pleasant as he could. "What a big chap you are!" he said. "And have been all through the war—Mons Star and all, I hear! I shall want to be told about that."

Clara sighed a little as she led him into the dining-room and placed him on her right hand. Gilbert's military career had been a disappointment to her. Major Doran and he had gone out together, both of them as captains, in the earliest months. Now Doran was a major and had won the Military Cross. Gil had remained a captain, and acquired nothing more honourable than wound stripes. She could not, however, speak of this to Strachan; and her preoccupation with the serving and waiting at table made her at all times a bad conversationalist at meals. However, there was no lack of talk. Strachan was agreeably disappointed with the family. On closer acquaintance he thought his first verdict had been unduly unfavourable. He began to hope that he was not quite so destitute in the matter of kinsfolk as at first he had feared.

After dinner there was a little music. Miss Garth most suitably declared that she neither played nor sang, so Phyl and Vee got their chance without rivalry. They performed like any other girls of their class and type. They had no natural taste and not much ability; and though they had had expensive lessons, the result was deplorably mediocre. The most one could say of their performance was that a quarter of a century earlier it would probably have been worse.

Mrs. Cranstoun-Brown, however, being herself entirely without discrimination, was very well satisfied. She told Mr. Strachan that the girls had had every advantage, and condoled with Miss Garth upon the privation of not being able to perform. Miss Garth replied that her father had held the view that a girl with no natural taste for music should not waste her time in learning to play a musical instrument. Mrs. Brown complacently approved, but remarked that she was glad her girls had so marked a taste, otherwise their father and she would have missed a great deal of pleasure.

Gilbert struck in suddenly and remarked that for his part he did not think the girls were really musical at all. He had offered to take them to the new Strauss opera, and they had not cared to go.

Miss Garth turned her head to him swiftly. "You like music?"

Gil hesitated a moment, and then said: "I know nothing at all about it, but it has a great effect on me. At least, I know enough to know that that isn't music," nodding his head towards the girls.

"So, after all," reflected Miss Garth, "he is really the least common-place of the family."

After the musical performance Vee inveigled everybody into playing a round game of cards, in which she sat next to Cousin George, and shamelessly helped herself to his counters when her own ran short, rising from the table by this means an unfair winner, to her sister's hardly concealed vexation.

However, Mr. Strachan was laughing and quite animated when they separated for the night.

But to Gilbert the whole time passed like a dream in which nothing was clearly focused, except a quarter of an hour spent almost in silence sitting in the firelight, opposite a girl who was wholly unlike any girl in his previous experience, while a crescent moon swam in a spring sky that shaded from sapphire to apricot.

CHAPTER VIII

The Dinner-Party

THE house of Redmays, upon the morning of the day fixed for the dinner-party in Strachan's honour, showed a somewhat startling departure from its usual routine of well-ordered comfort.

GEORGE STRACHAN'S HEIRS

So complete and heart-whole was its abandonment to the effort of the evening that the visitor thought, with a twinkle, that it must be supplying his secretary with excellent "copy."

It began at breakfast-time. Mrs. Cranston-Brown, looking worried and absent, suggested his taking out Miss Garth for a long motor run, as she and the girls would not be at leisure to entertain him. This he cheerfully consented to do, for he was always content to drive with his congenial companion. He declared that during the past week he had learned more of the history of his native land, through the medium of its village churches, than he had ever acquired by means of history books.

A trivial incident caused the alteration of this plan. Flowers for the dinner-table were under discussion, it happening to be the day of the week when neighbouring florists were ill supplied with fresh ones. Miss Garth suggested that the garden contained masses of lovely lilac, both white and purple. Looking compassionately at her, Mrs. Brown vouchsafed the information that lilac will not live in water. Miss Garth, with a smile, very courteously assured her that she was mistaken.

"I will guarantee that any lilac which I put into water will live several days in its full freshness," said she. "I assure you I am talking of what I understand."

"H'mph! One of these Swanley students, are you? But they are of no use. Old Colonel Doran tried one. She expected him to do all the weeding. If you took up floriculture professionally, may I ask why you gave it up, Miss Garth?"

"I never took it up," said Charis, smiling. "But I do know the secret of making lilac live in water."

"Lilac is, in my opinion, not a table flower."

"Oh, no. I would not put it on the table. But we might do the whole drawing-room with it, and put a big pot in the hall. Then you would need to buy only enough tulips for the table."

"We may as well try it, Ma. Flowers are such a price," said Phyllis grudgingly. She had decided, within a few minutes of her cousin's arrival, that she would be his wife; and she was of an iron determination. Her feeling, not only towards Miss Garth, but towards her own sister, was that of smothered rage and spite, ever ready to break out; and only Vee knew the full urgency of the

motives which goaded her onward, and how vital it was that she should marry a rich man shortly.

It being conceded that the experiment be made, Strachan gladly consented to postpone his drive; and his secretary went into the garden and gathered odorous spikes of young, just-blooming flowers, looking as though the tips had been dipped into red wine, too lately blown to show any trace of suburban grime. Having borrowed a hammer, she proceeded to pound the hard, woody stems into pulp and fibre for two or three inches up, and then disposed the branches in deep vases with a dexterity which her hostess was fain to admire.

"It'll set people talking," said Phyllis, watching. "Everybody always says you can't cut lilac because it won't live. I feel doubtful, even now, if it won't be hanging its head in a few hours."

"Let's bet on it, Phyl," said Cousin George, who, cigar in mouth, had been watching the whole process. "Five pounds to a photo of yourself that Miss Garth's flowers won't wilt."

"Ugh! Corrupter of youth!" said his disrespectful secretary, who was on excellent terms with him by this time. "So Yankee too! Talking about wilting! You should remember you are British, should he not, Miss Cranston-Brown?"

Phyllis, who had turned crimson when her cousin thus asked for a photo of herself, stared coldly. "I should not think of criticising Cousin George. I will take his bet," said she; and to her annoyance Cousin George said teasingly to Miss Garth, who did not seem at all crushed:

"Thank you, my dear. You managed that very nicely."

Managed that? Phyllis went off with her mother's keys to get the best glass out of the cupboard, pondering this mysterious phrase.

"Did he mean that she knew he wanted my photo, and that she spoke against him on purpose to make me a little angry, so that I should take the bet? I suppose so. Then has he told her that he admires me? Perhaps. He had hardly been here five minutes before he showed that he thinks me pretty.. Does he think her pretty, I wonder? I don't. But she's clever in a sort of way. No doubt he finds her useful. However, when I marry him, I shall persuade him to get rid of her. Something about her that confuses me somehow."

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After lunch Miss Garth quietly suggested to Strachan that he should take Phyllis instead of herself out in the car.

"She looks tired," said she, "and I can help Mrs. Brown in her place. I find it interesting, you know. It never occurred to me before to wonder how people manage when they give a dinner-party."

Thus it was arranged, and Mrs. Brown, to her own surprise, found herself allowing the secretary to wipe wine-glasses and blanch almonds, to fill cut-glass fingerbowls and strew a few violets in each.

Like most otherwise commodious suburban houses, Redmays contained no servants' hall, and only a mere slip of a pantry—just a bit of passage boarded off, with a sink fitted at the end.

"It's not very roomy, when there is such a lot of silver to be washed up," sighed the care-worn hostess. "Did your mother do much entertaining, Miss Garth?"

"My mother died when I was a child, and was an invalid for some time before her death."

"Then I suppose you don't remember where the silver was washed up when there was a dinner-party, do you?"

"Why, really, I haven't an idea. I suppose the but—" began Miss Garth, biting off a word short and growing rather pink.

"The butt? What, the soft-water butt? You must be mistaken, I am sure. They could not have used that."

"How stupid of me. Of course not. Our country house—our house was in the country, I should say—was old and rambling. We suffered from too much space rather than too little."

"I see. One of these old-fashioned houses. No conveniences."

"No, none."

"In Westmorland, I think you said?"

"Yes."

"I don't notice that you have any north-country accent."

"It—it isn't very marked, I think. My mother came from the south."

"That would account for it. How did she like all the inconveniences? I suppose your water had to be pumped?"

"Yes, it was all pumped."

"You had a garden man, perhaps, who could do it?"

"I—I believe it *was* done by a—the gardening man." (But he didn't do it half as persistently as you are doing it now, she only added.)

"Oh, well," said Mrs. Brown genially, "after living so secluded it's really quite a chance for you to see a little society. There's one thing, it's all the best people in Streathwood that you'll be meeting this evening."

Charis gravely replied that she had no doubt it would be most interesting. A sense of shame was pricking her. Was it fair to allow the simple-minded lady to go on spreading herself?

"Whoever marries one of my girls," continued Mrs. Brown complacently, "will marry one that has been trained to keep house in the correct style. Everything good and solid has always been my motto. Plentiful supplies, but no waste permitted. There is not much of such housekeeping nowadays; but my daughter, Miss Cranston-Brown, is truly domestic. Her husband will have a treasure. I hope she is enjoying her drive."

"She can hardly fail to enjoy Mr. Strachan's society, I think. He is so thoughtful for others."

"Even those in his employment," replied Mrs. Brown, while her boot-button eyes regarded the speaker furtively. "I think my cousin's spirits have improved since his coming here."

"I am sure of it," replied Miss Garth, with a cordial alacrity which was flattering.

"I thought it would be so. We are his own kin, you see; and blood, after all, is thicker than water."

Having made this pronouncement with all the emphasis of one who has hit upon an original and striking thought, the lady departed, leaving her guest to finish polishing the glasses, with an odd expression compressing the corners of her tucked-in mouth—an expression suggesting guilt. She had to whisper to herself, "My daughter, Miss Cranston-Brown," before she could amuse herself with the situation created by her sailing under false colours.



Since his bereavement social functions had been to Strachan bitterly repugnant. He would not, however, allow his anti-social inclinations to appear, since he knew the guests had been bidden to do honour to himself, and he understood in part the gratification which Clara must feel in presenting him to her friends.

At the urgent request of his flurried relatives, he dressed in good time and



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GEORGE STRACHAN'S HEIRS

joined them in the drawing-room. The daughters of the house were both extremely smart. He did not like their gowns, but could not explain to himself the source of his disapproval. He watched for Miss Garth to come down, with an earnest hope that she would present a contrast. Some important letters had arrived by the afternoon post, so his secretary was a little late. No guests had, however, arrived when she slipped quietly in. She was in white, and a necklace of seed-pearls was round her throat. Her abundant hair was very simply arranged, and she wore no gloves nor bracelets. It was thus not easy to say why she conveyed the impression of being much more *en grande toilette* than anyone else present.

Both the Brown girls had red ears as well as red hands. There was a red mark upon their chests, due to wearing blouses low in front. The arms, displayed almost without sleeves, were of coarse and mottled texture. Miss Garth's ears were cream-colour, slightly warmed to pink, like the petals of a tea rose. Her ringless fingers were rosy only at the tips.

She entered with a slight apology for lateness, to which Mr. Cranstoun-Brown cordially replied that Strachan had duly explained.

Gilbert was standing stiffly on the watch. He had hardly spoken two words to her since the first evening of her stay, and he found the sight of her oddly overwhelming. When, not having seen him that morning, she now acknowledged his presence with a slight bow and smile of greeting, he felt ridiculously as if some member of the Royal Family had accorded him gracious recognition.

As for Charis herself, she had dressed as plainly as she could, with the express intention of being outshone by the other ladies. She now perceived that she had struck the wrong note—that something in her elaborate simplicity looked as though holding up the other girls to an unspoken condemnation. She could but trust that such subtleties would not occur to the Redmays family. To the host they did not; his wife and daughter, however, without understanding, felt obscurely snubbed.

To cover her own vague sense of dissatisfaction, Vee began to chatter.

"How good something smells! Why, it's lilac! Well, Ma, how many times have I wanted to use our lilac, and you would never let me!"

Miss Garth glanced at the masses of bloom and laughed up at Strachan. "Miss Cranstoun-Brown has lost her bet; you will get your photo," said she.

"What's that? What's that?" cried Clara. "A bet between you and Phyllis, George?"

"I bet Phyllis five pounds to a copy of one of those nice pictures of herself, such as you have on the mantelpiece here, that Miss Garth's lilac would not wilt—I ask pardon, would not fade; my secretary is particular about my English."

His cousin caught with glee upon the portion of this remark which she understood. There was some joke, some little incident, between her daughter and George. Phyllis, all smiles, had gone to a drawer and extracted an elaborately mounted and mistily focused photograph, which she presented to Strachan, who received it with *empressement*. Perhaps he rather spoilt the effect by remarking:

"I thought my five pounds was pretty safe."

"But how *did* you make lilac live in water?" demanded Vee somewhat peremptorily of Miss Garth. Before the latter could reply, however, the one-night butler threw open the door and announced the first arrivals.

All the rest of the party were assembled by the time a name was announced which made Charis glance towards the door with interest.

"Mrs. Varick and Major Doran."

These two were the subject of more or less constant talk at Redmays, and she knew them to be brother and sister.

At first sight of them she felt a slight tremor, for these looked like people of her own sort. Major Doran was good-looking, well set up, and tailored by someone in Savile Row. His sister was a woman you would notice in any room—self-possessed, with grace of carriage, and a little head which she held proudly. She was older than Charis had guessed her to be—she must have been thirty—but at first sight of her one instantly thought, "Oh, you charming creature!"

Mrs. Cranstoun-Brown presented them both with effusion to Strachan; and Charis, in her capacity of looker-on, watched with interest, as Vee drew near to the conquering major, and Gilbert to his sister.

"Hallo, Major!" was Vee's greeting, accompanied by one of her daring looks.



"In an instant he turned abruptly to Vee and said, 'Who is the fair unknown?'"

Drawn by
J. Dewar Mills

"How's the world treating you? And what do you think of our tame millionaire?"

"Millionaire, eh?" said Doran, turning his gaze upon Strachan with attention; but in an instant he turned abruptly to Vee and said in an undertone:

"Who is the fair unknown? Is she his wife?"

"The fair unknown?" Vee was genuinely puzzled.

"There, over by the window," he went on, "a woman you would not expect to

see in Streatwood. In pity tell me who she is. Wonder what that gown cost."

Vee started. "That! My cousin's secretary, do you mean?"

"Your cousin has my congrats. Worth being a millionaire, if one can do oneself like that in the matter of a secretary. I suppose you and she are pretty chummy, being in the same line of business?"

Vee coloured angrily. "Not much resemblance. I took on my job for fun, as you know. But she has to earn her living."

"Earns a good one, judging by her gown," said Doran in an absorbed way.

"You talk as if she were the only woman in the room who had a gown on," snapped Vee, desperately piqued. She suddenly felt that the local dressmaker was intolerable. What was there in the cut of that little white frock?

"She makes me feel like that," he answered, unperturbed. "Do make me known to her, won't you?"

"Come along, and see if she is as charming as she appears," replied Vee; and though she was trembling with mortification she managed a light note.

She saw her mother cast a baleful glance, but returned it with a defiant glare, led the major up, and presented him to Charis, who received very calmly the full, steady gaze of fine grey Irish eyes.

"Garth?" said Doran gently. "Any relation to General Garth? I was under him at one time."

"None whatever. None of my uncles is a general," she replied indifferently.

"Do you know, I have a kind of idea that I have met you somewhere?"

"Indeed? Very likely," she replied, with an implication that she might easily have met him without remembering the fact, which stung him in his very vulnerable vanity.

"Do let us try and think where it can have been—it is a rather fascinating game—like that deadly guessing game where you may only reply to such questions as may be answered by 'Yes' or 'No.'"

"If that will amuse you," she returned listlessly, and for a moment he thought she was dull; but almost at once he revised his opinion. She lifted her eyes and looked at him, quietly but searchingly; and somehow that look told him that she was purposely trying to seem dull, in order to detach him. Now why?

CHAPTER IX An Exciting Scheme

MISS GARTH'S honest intention to melt into the background was easier of design than accomplishment. It had seemed to her that the presence at table of a meek supernumerary, plainly garbed, would pass unnoticed save by the male guest who was considered unimportant enough to have to take her in. But the exigencies of precedence had obliged the hostess to place the younger people towards the middle of either side, and when they were seated Charis found that she had Major Doran on her left. Her right-hand neighbour, a deaf and nervous middle-aged solicitor, had, of course, the first claim upon her conversation. The major, however, assailed her upon the other side with such persistence that finally she was obliged to turn to him.

As long as his conversational openings were merely "feelers," she was obstinately monosyllabic; but when he proceeded to the mention of a new play lately presented, she yielded to the temptation to discuss it with one who had evidently not only seen much, but had even thought—a little. But they had not talked long before the flame of Vee's resentment seemed to reach her like tangible heat. With a hurried "I don't know; ask Miss Veronica—she can tell you," she turned her shoulder to him and resolutely tackled her solicitor, who could apparently fix his mind upon nothing but the culture of salpiglossis.

"I can assure you," said he earnestly, "hundreds of people with gardens don't know their value as a means of obtaining

a mass of varied colour at a small outlay—and so easy to grow."

Her interest was so well feigned that in a burst of confidence he disclosed to her the name of his own special seed merchant, even going the length of writing it down for her upon the back of his name card. It was just as she looked up from this absorbing transaction that she caught Gilbert's eye across the table, and wondered what, exactly, it expressed. It was, however, not until much later in the evening, after the emergence of the gentlemen from the dining-room, that she found herself near enough to him to ask him.

"I caught you looking at me across the table in the midst of my struggles to be interested in Mr. Wibley. What were you thinking about, I wonder?"

He looked for a moment utterly loutish and tongue-tied.

"Why, I—I was just *looking* . . . you were right opposite me, you know. . . ."

"Oh, what a let-down for my vanity! You seemed to be saying so much—to be looking so significantly! I thought you were admiring my Christian charity—or perhaps despising my hypocrisy."

"The second conjecture would be nearer the mark," was his most unexpected answer. "You are a good actor. The poor chap had no idea he was boring you . . . but the truth is——"

"Yes? The truth is——?"

"A thing one never tells," muttered Gilbert, looking at the carpet.

She hesitated, faintly puzzled, and made as if she would pass on.

"No, don't," he suddenly said. "Sit down here and talk to me. Since that first evening you have hardly spoken to me, and I'm no worse than old Wibley, anyway."

"Ah, but entertaining *you* isn't part of my duty," she reminded him demurely. Nevertheless, she sat down, for she was tired.

Gilbert's vigilant mother was deeply absorbed at a distance, with her back to them, talking to a companion of congenial age and tastes.

"Now," said the young man deliberately, "I want to know something about yourself. Where do you come from?"

She looked wicked. "I was born of poor but dishonest parents——"

"We'll cut the prologue," he broke in doggedly and without a smile. "Are you a Londoner?"

THE QUIVER

"Kind sir, I am not. I am a sort of Lucy, to tell you the truth. I dwelt among the untrodden ways, beside the springs of—not Dove, but some other river of much the same kind. A maid whom there was none to praise and only one to love."

"Only one?" sharply, and as it were angrily.

A shade crossed the downbent face upon which his eyes were steadily fixed. "Only one, for a long time. My mother died when I was twelve, and my father, so I am told, spoilt me horribly. I never had a brother to take me down, as I hear you take down your sisters. We lived in retirement, and I suppose I grew unbearable, for after remaining a widower for seven years or so, my father married again." Lifting her eyes for a moment, she only recoiled from the dumb feeling in his, and shook her head with a provoking smile. "Oh, you're quite wrong. The lady didn't turn me out. On the contrary, she thinks me a perfect toad because I wouldn't stay at home. She thinks I am so selfish to leave her alone in her dullness . . . when she has *him*, all to herself! That's what I can't bear. She has stolen him from me, and now she has got him she is already tired of it."

Gilbert said absolutely nothing for some time. Had she reflected, she might have wondered how she knew that his silence was the measure of his sympathy.

"You'll go back," he said at last.

"You think so? I wonder. What I mind is, not having her in my place as mistress—oh, how soon I could forgive her that, if she made him happy! It is the seeing him miserable, which upsets me so! . . . And now," she looked at him challengingly, "you have heard more than I ever told Mr. Strachan!"

His face changed oddly. His lip quivered. He had large lips, but they were finely cut. "You like my cousin?" he asked.

"Not *that*," whispered she, with a daring smile, which he shared.

"Will you go back to Canada with him, do you think?"

"It's possible I might, if he wants me. But, you see, there is a difficulty. In the eyes of a censorious world we still want a chaperon, he and I, in spite of modern emancipation. He is a very proper old dear, and I know he thinks so. So we shall probably be obliged, reluctantly, to part . . ."

"Or—" began Gilbert.

"Or engage a chaperon," she finished glibly, "if he takes a house in England. I believe that is what he thinks of doing."

"He—he may do as your father has done," hazarded Gilbert.

"He may, of course; but somehow I don't think he will—not yet awhile, anyway. He talks always of his dear people, rather as if they were awaiting him the other side of the Atlantic. It's rather pathetic."

"Yes. It's pathetic."

"Well," said Miss Garth with some briskness, dragging him out of one of those silences of his which she found oddly eloquent. "Now it's your turn. You've had my history. The second traveller then commenced the narrative of his life. Were you born in this house?"

"No. I was born in a little white house on the Common. Much nicer, to my thinking, but less pretentious. In those days, the place wasn't much built over. It was just leaving off being a village, and my mother used to let me go out to play on the Common."

"And then I suppose you went to school?"

"Yes. To Haileybury. I didn't do much good there. However, my mater was set on my going to Oxford, so I went. Never did anything there, either. Just not good enough for my college boat or my college eleven. I'm what they call a hopeless mediocrity."

"Do they? Then they haven't much discernment."

"What do you mean by that?"

"A mediocrity could hardly get outside himself and judge himself as you have just done. And what do you do now? Did you find it hard to settle down after the war?"

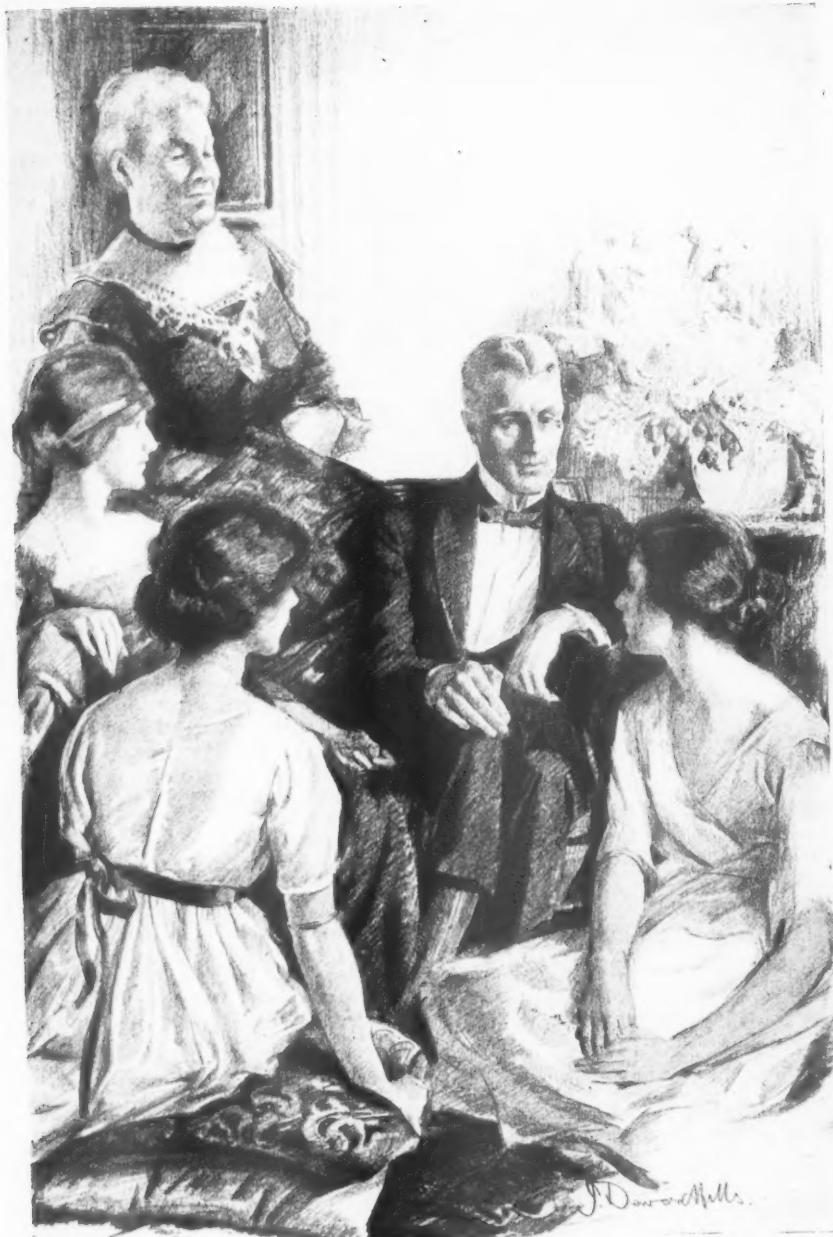
"Hard to settle down? I'd do any job that gave me a chance to earn a living. But there's nothing doing. I'm in my father's office because I can't sit fuming at home; but I'm farther from advancement of any kind than I was six years ago. However, I hope I see a break in the clouds now——"

"You do?"

"I want to persuade Strachan to take me out into his business in Canada. Only I'm afraid he thinks I'm a fool——"

As she was about to reply, Major Doran's voice broke in.

"Miss Garth, you monopolize my company commander."



"Cousin George sat, as it were, enthroned upon the settee, with an air of enjoying himself very much"—p. 162

Drawn by
J. Dewar Mills

THE QUIVER

"Not one of your happiest gambits, Doran," said Gil drily. "It is I, on the contrary, who am monopolizing Miss Garth."

"Easily understood; but don't go. I have something to talk about, to both of you. I have been having a long chat with Mr. Strachan, who is positively one of the best. It appears he is intending to go up north to stay with some relatives of his, and wants to do it in his car. It dawned upon me that Sheila and I want to do a tour, and that your party is rather big for one car and ours too small. If we have two cars, we can divide more comfortably—eh? Some scheme, Gil? Your father will give you a fortnight off, won't he?"

"I can take a fortnight of my holiday now instead of later, if that's what you mean."

Miss Garth smiled. "You think a tour would bore you, Mr. Cranstoun-Brown? Why not be brave and say you are not coming?"

"Because I am coming," said Gilbert, in such a snubbing voice that she and Doran laughed teasingly at him.

"You'll get used to Gil," observed the major easily. "He's a bit of a Cymon, who hasn't yet met his Iphigenia."

"Don't understand the allusion," muttered Gil, this time in tones decidedly sulky.

"Look at your 'Decameron,' if Mrs. Cranstoun-Brown allows such a thing in the house. But now come over here and help us to thrash out this important scheme."

They both followed him to where Cousin George sat, as it were, enthroned upon the settee, with an air of enjoying himself very much. Beside him was Mrs. Varick, leaning back in her corner, with a face full of approval. Phyllis sat on a low chair, facing them, and Vee knelt at her cousin's knee.

"Come here, Gilbert, we want you," said Mrs. Varick, with the pretty little air of married-woman patronage which sat so well upon her. "We have hit upon the best idea that has come my way for months, and we owe it to the vast brain of this wonderful cousin of yours!"

"Yes, isn't he priceless?" cried Vee. "I never thought any real live man could be so attractive!"

Gilbert hunched his shoulders and stared at Sheila in his meditative way. "Strikes me, if Cousin George goes, Doran and I will get a pretty thin time," said he. "Look at you all! Disgraceful!"

"You must forgive us!" cried Sheila. "He really is, as Vee says, priceless! He has been telling us all about his early life! He was born in Brough, all among the moors; but as soon as he was old enough to work, they sent him to Darlington, and he was there in a dirty factory, like George Stephenson—all among whirring machinery and hot oily smells! But whenever he had a holiday, he used to escape, up to Teesdale, or the valley of the Greta, and now he is going to stay with his cousin, who is vicar of some place near what he calls 'Barney-Cassell.'"

Strachan's eyes twinkled appreciatively at the pretty speaker, who had caught his accent exactly. "I guess I shall be pretty well guyed before this trip is over," said he. "However, go on, little girls! It amuses you, and I can stand it."

As he spoke, his eye caught that of his secretary, and he saw a disturbed look on her face. "Miss Garth," said he, "I hope this plan of the tour has your approval?"

Charis flinched. She saw Mrs. Varick's beautiful eyes upturned to her in deep surprise. She caught a hostile flash in the eyes of Phyllis; and, worse than all, she heard from behind her the peculiar little snort which always heralded the annoyance of Mrs. Cranstoun-Brown, who had been busy bidding her guests farewell, and now came to know the meaning of the vivacious group clustered round the sofa.

"What can it be for which the approval of Miss Garth is so necessary, George?" asked she, with weighty sarcasm.

"Mr. Strachan was joking," said Charis gently, furious with herself for the hot colour which she could not control and for her knowledge that Major Doran was deeply on the alert.

"Why, Clara," said Strachan, "I must tell you of this plan which has suddenly leapt into being. We intend to make a tour of the north in my car and that belonging to Major Doran. But you look as if you thought I am hardly to be trusted with all this youth and beauty?"

"We are rather sweet, aren't we?" said Vee rapturously. "As dear Lord Tennyson so winningly put it, we are rosebuds set with little wilful thorns, and sweet as English air can make us."

"And Mrs. Varick," said Strachan gallantly, "is queen rose of the rosebud garden—eh?"

Clara gulped. She began to feel that she

GEORGE STRACHAN'S HEIRS

might have done more wisely to keep her millionaire to herself than to introduce him to the charming Dorans. With all the force of her will she intended that Gilbert should marry Sheila Varick, and Veronica the major; but as she looked at the unexpected sociability and content of Strachan, she had a sinking of the heart. What was there to prevent his re-marriage? Even her maternal partiality could not persuade her that Phyllis was anything like as attractive as Sheila.

"Do you think," Vee was running on, "that girls ever were really like that? Pouting and babyish and adorable? I'm sure Ma never was—were you, Ma?"

"Your mother was a handsome girl," put in Strachan gallantly. "I remember she wore a thing they called a bustle, to hold out her frock behind—" He broke off, shouted down in a chorus of "Shame!" by all the girls.

In the laughter which followed Mrs. Brown had time to regain her poise. The motoring was a daring scheme, true, but so delightfully modern and wealthy-sounding—quite the sort of plan of which she could boast to her acquaintance. Whatever the Dorans did was right in her eyes, and that her own children should, by their cousin's generosity, be included in the tour, was a source of gratification which nothing could spoil.

Vee burst out:

"There once was a bold millionaire
Who conducted a bevy of fair
Young people like posies
Of lilies and roses—
And I really can't think how he dare!"

"Impromptu?" said Doran approvingly.
"Good, Miss Veronica, good indeed!"

"I really can't think how he dare!" repeated Strachan with relish. "My accent and all, you little terror!"

"I mean to make a book of Limericks during the tour and present it to you, Cousin George, on our return—



"Ah," said she mischievously, "I wasn't hired to report upon him"—p. 165

drawn by
J. Dewar Mills

if we ever do return, which seems to me unlikely now that I know the Dorans' chauffeur is to go with us, as he is celebrated for emptying me into ditches! Ah, well, well! That was a first instalment, merely to give you a touch of my quality! It is nothing, simply nothing to what I shall venture upon later on in our bold, bad career! I don't know what I may say or do, as Ma won't be there to sit on my head!"

THE QUIVER

"No, but I shall," said Doran menacingly. "Have I your leave, Mrs. Cranston-Brown, to correct your daughter judiciously?"

"Steady!" said Strachan drily. "If this trip comes off, it is understood, please, that I am Dictator. I dispense the higher, low, and middle justice. All offenders are brought to me for correction."

"Agreed!" was the unanimous cry; and the millionaire looked whimsically at his cousin Clara with his hand outstretched.

"Hear that? Can there be a doubt of my controlling them? This expedition will glide along on velvet now that everybody knows I mean to run it!"

CHAPTER X Comparing Notes

DIRECTLY Strachan and his secretary were alone together after breakfast the following morning he laid his hand over hers as she sat rather listlessly at the table awaiting his dictation.

"And now, my dear, tell Daddy all about it," said he tenderly.

Charis glanced up at him, hesitated. Her lip quivered.

"You don't like the idea of this trip?" he asked kindly.

"Oh, what a saint you are! How you bear with my folly and tantrums!" she murmured, looking down and nervously tracing scrolls on her blotting-paper. "Do please remember that I'm your employee——"

"And no more?" he asked, after an interval.

His voice sounded hurt, she thought.

"You are much more to me than just my employer," she said in a low voice, "but that is not to the point. I—I've never told you anything of myself—I don't say my Past, for that sounds lurid, and very unlike the facts, which are dull as dull can be. But I think you know that I have left home, and—and that I don't want my people to know where I am to be found. . . . Oh, I'm not heartless. I send them news of my safety, and they have an address to which they can write. But I don't want them to track me down. In fact, I won't have it . . . and, you know, they live up there."

"Near Brough?"

"No. Among the lakes. Not far from Uttermere."

"Well, we can easily avoid——"

She stopped him, with passion. "Don't! Just fancy my whims interfering with your convenience! You must go where you like, and not consider me. If you are going in that direction, I can easily be taken unwell and get left behind for a few days . . . but that your secretary should be making stipulations! Well, you heard what Mrs. Brown thought of me, last night!"

"I regret extremely that I let you in for anything of the kind. It was thoughtless of me. Well; but now that you have more or less taken me into your confidence, the thing can be managed without an effort."

"Don't you think," she said, colouring deeply, and evidently forcing herself to make the suggestion, "that I had better not come at all? Could you not do without me? . . . Vee is very capable, and a trained secretary."

He turned with a quick movement and searched her face. "You want to leave me?"

Her answer was inaudible, but she shook her head in a decided negative. He rejoined, after a silence, "I sometimes think you are in some trouble I could likely help."

She cleared her throat. "Then I am giving you quite a wrong impression. I am in no trouble. I am enjoying myself hugely. I am absorbing all kinds of new impressions."

"Studying the curious underworld squirming beneath your microscope?"

"Oh!" She started, blushing hotly. "What are you talking about?"

He met her gaze humorously. "I'm not quite blind, Miss Garth; and remember, you did let slip the fact that you intended to write a book. I gather you are amassing some new experiences?"

"Indeed, yes."

"What of this tour? Won't it help?"

"Why, of course, but——"

"From my point of view," he said seriously, "your presence will be invaluable. Character will be displayed inevitably during such long periods of companionship. I shall need my watchwoman more than ever."

She dwelt upon his kind, wise smile. He was extraordinarily fascinating, and as she gazed the smile broadened, became in fact a chuckle.

"What do you think of Vee?" he asked.

"I haven't decided yet. But I think I like her."

GEORGE STRACHAN'S HEIRS

"She is vain, though. She likes to show off. She talks at large. Her sister is more honest—"

"No!" cried Charis quickly.

"You think not?"

"I think Phyllis is the cunning one. Vee is easy to see through; the other girl is continually scheming."

He demurred. Evidently his judgment did not jump with hers. "Yesterday, when she and I drove together, I found her more conversable than I expected, and she seemed to be a right-minded girl."

Charis laughed. "I begin to realize that you do need me, badly," said she. "Men seem to be easily gulled. But, as a matter of fact, I have not nearly made up my own mind yet. I only know which of the family I think has the most character, so far."

"Which is that?"

"The son."

"Gilbert? Well, now you *do* surprise me. He seems to me both surly and stupid."

"He said you took him for a fool. Can't you see that his refraining from any attempt to curry favour is an excellent sign? Especially when you represent literally his only hope—"

"His only hope? How so?"

"Why, the war cut him off short, just as he had done with Oxford. Now he is back in civil life, at close on thirty, with no prospects. He wants to go into your business—"

"Well, but do just say what it is you see in him? I grant there is plenty of him physically—but besides that?"

"Perhaps," said she, after a moment's thought, "one has a natural sympathy for anybody who is starving."

"Starving?"

"Yes. He seems to me as though all the better part of him is dwindling and pining away for lack of nourishment, because he is so unlike the rest of his family."

"Then he has confided in you?"

She laughed a little. "That was what made me think it might perhaps be safer for me not to go with you on this tour," said she. "Please don't think me unduly vain. I don't suppose myself irresistible; but I think I am sympathetic, and if a man has literally nobody else to speak to—! However, seriously, I don't think we need fear complications of that kind, since Mrs. Varick is coming too."

He looked quite startled. "Mrs. Varick?"

"She finds Mr. Gilbert interesting, I am sure, and she is really charming."

"She is indeed. But older than he, I imagine."

"Only a year or two. What's that?"

He fell silent, turning over these side lights on the situation in his mind. "I can't picture any pretty woman looking twice at Gilbert Brown," he said at last.

"As far as I am concerned, make yourself quite comfortable," she answered gaily; "but I assure you there is much more in him than you have discovered. Do try and cultivate him. He will never toady to you."

"Yet he told you he was thirsting for sympathy?"

"Mercy, no! Nothing of the kind. I know it by my psychological insight—little casual things, dropped unconsciously."

"Things he would never, conceivably, have said to me?"

"Certainly not."

He smiled upon her humorously. "I'm glad you think of writing a book. It should be a clever one."

She shook her head, laughing.

"What impression," he wished to know, "was made upon you by the psychology of the great Major Doran?"

"Ah," said she mischievously, "I wasn't hired to report upon him. His psychology doesn't come in."

"Pardon me. If he should marry either of my young cousins, it would certainly come in."

"I see! Well then, after what I had heard the girls say, I was agreeably disappointed. I pictured the spoilt eligible of a second-rate neighbourhood. But he is an interesting talker, and didn't try one bit to patronize the humble secretary, though Vee carefully assured him of my dependent position at once, to save mistakes."

Strachan's smile widened to a grin. "I advise you to begin that book at once," said he, taking up the letter she laid before him, "but if you write it and don't give me a chance to read it, I'll never forgive you!"

CHAPTER XI

Colonel Morrison Wonders

MAJOR DORAN and Mrs. Varick dined at Redmays the night before the party started on their tour. Since the first arrangement the number had been increased by the addition of a friend of the major's, one Colonel Morrison,

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This was the eldest son of a local land-owner. He was a friend of Gilbert and Doran, having had much to do with the raising to a war-footing of their battalion.

Mrs. Cranstoun-Brown did not welcome his society altogether, since she believed him to have intentions upon Mrs. Varick. But, on the other hand, he represented the top note of social importance in her eyes. He intended to stand for the constituency at the next election, and the thought of being able to talk to her friends of his presence as a member of the party gave her indescribable pleasure.

She looked back with thankfulness upon her own foresight in determining that Gilbert and Vee should go to Oxford. Joseph had had his doubts, but she had insisted. Her children would now, she hoped, take their places one step higher on the ladder than their parents, a circumstance which seemed to their mother matter for rejoicing.

What with her anxieties respecting the disposal of Strachan's fortune, and her matrimonial schemes, she was consumed with an excitement and a preoccupation which she found most distracting. She had taken, by slow degrees, a fixed and increasing dislike to Miss Garth, and was convinced that this young woman meant to marry either the millionaire himself, or her son, the millionaire's heir. It was her daily manœuvre to prevent Charis from being seated next either Strachan or Gilbert at table. Charis was usually placed between her host and Phyllis; but on this night Colonel Morrison's presence made the sexes equal, and it was impossible to avoid putting Gilbert on one side of the siren.

As soon as the talk became general, Gilbert started to make the most of his chance.

"Do you remember Doran, when he was here the other night, called me Cymon, and said I had not met my Iphigenia?"

"Yes, I think I do."

"I had no idea what he meant. I thought of Simple Simon, or something else equally uncomplimentary. Of course, there was not a Boccaccio in the house; but I bought one, and found out."

Miss Garth had grown red. "Major Doran has a smart tongue," said she, "and people who talk smartly are apt to be careless. The allusion was neither courteous nor true."

"It was awfully interesting," he replied, "and I have been thinking about it a good deal. I am so like Cymon that I can follow

the workings of his mind. I have always realized that I don't easily get on with people; but I knew that was because I don't like what they like, or think as they think. It did not dawn on me that everybody looked on me as a dolt. Well, I think Cymon was in the same case. He wasn't an idiot really—he had simply never before come across the thing he was looking for—like a match that has never been struck, you know. I expect he wished, afterwards, that the thing had never happened. It's a bad thing for shepherds to cultivate a taste for kings' daughters, isn't it?"

Miss Garth was so surprised that she was taken at a disadvantage. "That would depend, wouldn't it," she answered vaguely, "on him, and on the princess too?"

"You mean, was she what Hans Andersen calls a real princess?"

"Perhaps I meant rather—what did she stand for, to him? If the sight of her opened his eyes to what was noble and beautiful, he would be better and happier for the meeting, would he not?"

"What! if he had to go back and marry into his own class?"

"Now, what has class to do with it? Is there no beauty or nobility but in one? His vision of the princess has taught him to look out for it, and if he seeks he will find."

After a pause Gilbert said: "Cymon wasn't seeking. He was just mooning along as usual . . . and there she was."

"But don't you see"—she was talking eagerly now, as to an equal—"half the significance of what you perceive is in yourself! You were right when you said Cymon cannot have been a dolt. If there was nothing in him to respond, he would have gazed unmoved upon the loveliest of women."

"Which is what Ulysses meant when he said, 'I am a part of all that I have met.'"

She was surprised at his aptness.

"Do you feel it a difficulty," he went on, "that the Kingdom of Heaven is sometimes found by those who don't know they are looking for it?"

"No. Because their part comes after the discovery. They must go and sell all they have and buy the field. There are the two qualities that make all greatness—effort and sacrifice!"

"If they preached like that in church, they might get one to listen," observed Gil without a smile.

GEORGE STRACHAN'S HEIRS

"Preaching, indeed!" she answered lightly. "Let us talk of something less grave—the fun we shall have to-morrow! Will you not be glad not to have to put on a stiff collar and go to the City? Doesn't the thought make your blood dance?"

"So much so that I have to sit tight and keep it under," he replied. "I can hardly believe it can be going to happen to me. I wish I need never go back to a London office. However, when I catch myself feeling like that in future, I shall say to myself, 'Effort and sacrifice!'"

As her eyes met his for a moment, Charis shivered. This must not be. She turned to her host, who was on her other side, and definitely included him in the conversation. He was a great authority upon the roads in his neighbourhood, and she succeeded in interesting him so much that his son could not lure her back into the intimacy of private talk.



After dinner, someone—nobody quite knew who—suggested Dumb Crambo.

In the unimaginative family of Cranstoun-Brown it had never been seen before. The Dorans, however, were quite used to it, so Mrs. Brown, at first somewhat inclined to bristle, soon grew to think it the most delightful of sports.

She was amazed, as was also Strachan, at the effects produced with a few scarves, cloaks, hats, and shawls. Miss Garth, it soon appeared, was an adept, and Major Doran contrived to appear in almost every scene in conjunction with her. They sat together in a casino, with cigarettes and little piles of money, with Gilbert as croupier and Morrison as a plunger who finally put a revolver to his own head and shot himself. They strolled past a ranting speaker in Hyde Park, and stood to listen to what he said, while Vee picked their pockets and was arrested by Gil in an old volunteer uniform. Then Doran played a serenade under her window, and she leaned out and tossed him a rose.

In the midst of her complacency this angered Mrs. Brown, who ascribed all to the secretary's machinations. However, Strachan, who sat beside her, was so delighted and amused that she was ashamed to show any dissatisfaction.

Gilbert had at first declined to take any part in the proceedings. Miss Garth quickly induced him to change his mind, and he

proved, in fact, a great acquisition, having perfect control over his facial muscles.

Towards the end of the evening, when invention was waning, and the fatigued company was searching for a rhyme to the word "bake," Gilbert suddenly went up to Miss Garth and said, "Let us have a really good one for the last. Let it be 'Wake.' I'll be Cymon if you'll be Iphigenia."

He said it purposely in the hearing of Doran, who eagerly caught up the idea. Miss Garth pressed the part upon Mrs. Varick, but as she had just been performing the death of Cleopatra, she declined, and began to help group the picture before Charis had time to object. Gilbert placed screens across the garden end of the drawing-room, so that the audience could not see his arrangement of the couch covered with a leopard-skin. He then proceeded to attire himself, by wrapping puttees round his evening trousers, taking off his coat, rolling the sleeves back from his brawny arms, wrapping himself in a rough frieze cloak, and ruffling his hair till it fell over his forehead.

Miss Garth let down her tumultuous locks and lay on the couch with her white dress draped in silvery drapery, and Doran grouped the other girls in attitudes of slumber about her feet.

When the screens were withdrawn, Gil was outside, in the blue summer night. The gravel crunched under his deliberate tread, and he came in carrying his alpenstock, shaded his eyes, peered at the sleeping group, advanced, and halted at the foot of the couch like a man turned to stone.

It was all a makeshift, rough, unfinished, but it was quite beautiful. Strachan felt himself holding his breath.

Gil, after standing perfectly still for a long breathing space, moved a little nearer, sank to his knees, and clasped his hands.

"I hope he won't kiss her," muttered the hostess uneasily.

"That," said Doran, "would be quite out of keeping. This is not the Sleeping Beauty. It is the Boccaccio story of Cymon and Iphigenia."

"Oh, of course," said the lady, who had never heard of the author, but in view of the intimacy which seemed to exist between him and Major Doran, dare not say so.

Strachan came to her rescue with an avowal of the utmost frankness. "I confess to ignorance, Doran. I know of only one Iphigenia, and she, if memory does not

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play me false, was the daughter of Agamemnon."

The major rose, and drew the screen across. "The story is that Cymon, who had always been taken for a fool, was uplifted by the sight of perfect beauty and perfect purity into a fully developed and charming young man. It's not unlikely, you know. The sort of thing that does happen, now and then."

An uncomfortable instinct told Strachan that it had undoubtedly happened to his cousin Gilbert.



"Well," said Mrs. Varick, as she and the two gentlemen were whizzed homeward, "how do you like your future fellow-travelers, Colonel?"

"Quite pleasant people," he returned, with cordiality, "especially Mr. Strachan. The lady who makes most impression is, however, the visitor, Miss Garford, or Garforth, I think."

"Oh! Mr. Strachan's secretary, who is staying in the house. Garth is the name, not Garford."

"Garth!" said Morrison, sitting suddenly erect. "Did you say Garth?"

"Why, do you know her? No relation of the general—I asked her."

"Some friends of mine," began Morrison, and paused. "Do you happen to know who she is, and where she comes from?" he asked.

"Sorry," said Mrs. Varick discouragingly, "I never heard of her until Mr. Strachan brought her to stay at Redmays."

"You haven't by chance heard her refer to the Trenby Hostel? It's a sort of residential club for ladies, in London."

"We can easily find out, in the course of our travels," suggested the major.

"Is she coming along? Good!" said Morrison, with satisfaction. "If she should be the girl I think she is—rather fun. I wonder!"

(End of Chapter Eleven)

The Three Birds

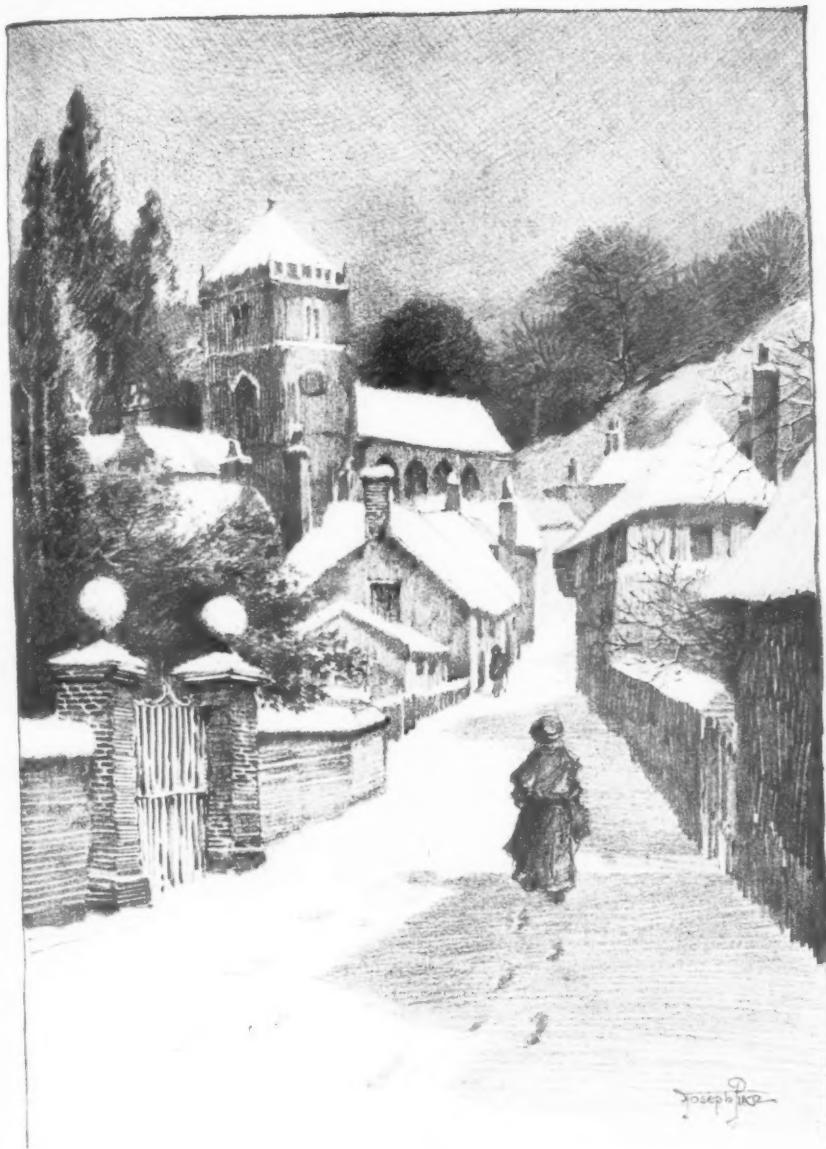
A Winter Story

By Grace Mary Golden

I HEARD a blackbird singing
Down in the woods in May :
"Come out, come out, good people !
'Tis Spring ! " he seemed to say.
Spring is for lovers' wooing,
For youth and hope and mirth—
Awake, awake, good people,
And greet the waking earth ! "

I heard a skylark singing
High in a cloudless sky,
His song of endless rapture
Trilled as he soared on high :
" Oh ! now is joy perfected,
And now is Summer here !
Life is all light and beauty,
And Love is everywhere ! "

I hear a robin singing :
" 'Tis Winter, friends, and cold !
The earth is bare of blossom,
The year is growing old,
But Love is never-changing,"
So runs the robin's song :
" Though all else fades and passes,
Love lasts the whole year long ! "



" 'Tis Winter, friends, and cold !
The earth is bare of blossom,
The year is growing old "



We Want More

ONE of my readers writes :

"As a constant reader and admirer of THE QUIVER, and one who has thoroughly enjoyed 'The Loop of Gold' and all the other stories (but for their brevity!), may I put in a plea for more of the old-time *complete* sort of story? The writers of to-day lead us to a certain point and then 'draw the curtain'—which leaves us with a burning thirst for more. We turn away with a disappointment verging on disgust.

"In real life we are not content to know that a friend whom we are specially interested in has allowed an admirer to 'hold her hand,' propose, or even 'lead her to the altar'—we like to follow their after-career. May I say how much we should enjoy a sequel to 'The Loop of Gold.' We should like to see Winnie in her 'new rôle,' to know a little more of the good-hearted Mr. Tebbitt, to further accompany the admirable Sally Withers, and the dear inspiring benefactress, etc., and to see the development of the housing scheme. Surely there is plenty of material."



Leaving Things to the Imagination

My sympathies go out to my correspondent. An editor, after all, is only a human sort of body, and I, too, have often thirsted to know more. These modern writers certainly do like to leave a good deal to the imagination. In the old-time story we were accustomed to see hero and heroine properly married, and, if the story left off before the arrival of the first child we wanted our money back. A more satisfactory conclusion went as far as two girls and a boy—and I, for one, was content to let the matter drop then; when you have three children you have your hands full, and onlookers can pass on to the next romance.

Nowadays the modern novelist tends to leave out the frillings. Sometimes he

hurries over just those most interesting parts when the hero gazes deep into the eyes of his lady love and says—well, we want to know exactly what he says, and should he merely exclaim, "Now, old thing, when's the date to be?" we feel intolerably outraged. Even if the love-making be treated generously the curtain runs down too soon. We twentieth century readers are prepared to put up with it if the author does not give us a parting vision of three cradles—modern couples do not seem to be in such a hurry about posterity as were their parents. But we should like to see them married and have a list of the presents; furthermore, we should like to know that a similar happy fate came the way of the sundry other characters incidentally introduced—the modern novelist too often forgets these altogether when he gets into his stride.



"The End" that did not End

Still, editors can't do everything, though occasionally they try to work the oracle. I remember one serial I had duly commissioned and—greatly dreading—started to print before the end arrived. In due course came a batch of copy, leaving the heroine running off on her own and the hero calmly pursuing his wayward path without a hint of the wedding bells. I went on printing, and, like my correspondent, asked for more. To my dismay by the next post I received a note from the good lady novelist explaining that "there was no more."

What could I do?

I knew the story could not end like that. My readers would write and upbraid me, they would storm the office and threaten my

BETWEEN OURSELVES

life, they would want their money back! In fear and trembling I went to see the good lady, and pointed out the difficulty. Very calmly she explained that that was the end; as a matter of fact, the hero and heroine couldn't marry: they weren't in the least suited to one another!

Here was a dilemma! You good readers who write up and complain when anything goes wrong have no idea what sort of awkward passages may occur behind the scenes!

What would *you* have done? Fortunately, we got over the difficulty. We found, after mature consideration, that there was just a chance that the couple could be "happy ever after." I think I suggested a compromise which happened to work. The author set pen to paper once again; the lady of the story reconsidered her decision, the hero proved tractable—and there you are.



A Legal Tangle

Worse things than that happen sometimes. One story I had commissioned from a celebrated novelist went sailing on all right until it neared its end—and I discovered that the hero was about to marry his half-sister! Now, in real life that could have been put right—we could have forbidden the banns! But you couldn't do that in a story—leastways, not at the *end* of a story; at the beginning it would have certainly made a sensational hit, but at the end—! A way out had to be found, and this time, I think, the author provided it. After searching the marriage register some way back he discovered that the unlucky couple *weren't* related after all: the young man, of course, was only a *foster*-brother of the maiden, secretly adopted into the family when a baby. Therefore there existed no reason—legal or otherwise—why they shouldn't marry, which they accordingly did, to the relief of myself and the satisfaction of my readers.



The Law of Sequels

But this demand for a sequel? Well, it has been tried again and again, and mostly it doesn't work. Somehow the interest is gone by the time the children are cutting their teeth, and when they reach manhood and womanhood they contrive to make themselves regrettably commonplace. There

are exceptions, of course. We all remember "Jo's Boys." Gertrude Page, too, has managed very successfully to introduce characters a second time; Mrs. Barclay, I believe, in two or three of her popular novels took some of the minor characters of her preceding works and put them in the centre part with entire success. But the rule holds good, generally speaking.



When Christmas Comes

When Christmas comes along the reader demands "thoroughly Christmassy stories." To be "thoroughly Christmassy" means, of course, plenty of snow and ice, family reconciliations, mistletoe and holly. What this entails on editor and author and artist is faintly hinted at in the rather frivolous section, "Nothing to do with Christmas," which has somehow crept into this issue! So often it happens that on a grilling hot August day the artist is commissioned to illustrate a Christmas story with strict instructions to put plenty of snow in it—and he promptly forgets to put an overcoat on the hero, or sends the heroine forth in a light summer blouse! I remember one Christmas I instructed an artist to depict a typical Christmas dinner scene: the turkey and the holly he managed all right, but put the younger members of the family in cricketing attire!



Christmas Heat

One often wonders what our readers in Australia, South Africa, etc., think of our "Christmassy" stories, with their snowy background. Perhaps, though, it is the very novelty of the idea which appeals, and, too, they can reflect that in England, at any rate, a snowy Christmas is the exception and not the rule. For those who do not like the "good old-fashioned Christmas" I must recommend the article on "Christmas Fallacies." This may seem cynical to some, but I suppose there are a number of cynics—even among my readers, and they can revel in the article even if they feel disgruntled with the stories!



The Embroidery of Life

For the rest of my big circle I can but commend the Christmas features as they are.

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The generality of people are just as pleased that Christmas comes once a year as they are that stories contain romance and heroes make love to heroines. Christmas—stories—romance : these are part of the embroidery of life that we would not lightly forgo. It is a poor heart that knows no rejoicing, and even frivolity has its place in the order of things. In this generation we do not so often meet the people who are so terribly in earnest that they cannot force a smile. Nor do we find good persons who, on principle, never open a novel or watch a side-show. When THE QUIVER was born sixty years ago there were still many people who looked askance at amusements of any but the most routine of recreations. Alas ! their very rigidity has produced a reaction that has sent many of the succeeding generation too far in the opposite direction. We must have recreation, change, amusement, and we cannot afford to let Christmastide slip into a mere outdoor jaunt or into a cynic's gibe. There is room still for the Christmas of family reunion, for the harmless jest and mirthful play. Let us put aside cold, hard business, with the fret and worry of life, and cultivate the human spirit, the honest laugh, the kindly thought, the hospitable garb. Let us have a merry Christmas.



The Joy that Overflows

Christmas as a festival comes down from the ages even before the birth of Christ. The pagans celebrated the passing of darkness, the lengthening of the day which occurs just at this time, and celebrated it with mirthful acclamation. But when Christianity came along it appropriated all that

was best in the old-time heathen celebration and interwove into the festival of the passing night the sacred celebration of the coming of the Prince of Day. Christmas does not mean simply the festival of the family : it celebrates the birth of Christ. So amid all our rejoicings we shall bear in mind the significance of the event, the high hope which the advent of the Christ Child brings to a world which still, after all these years, needs sadly the peace and righteousness He came to bring. Whilst we are rejoicing it is only fitting that we should remember those whom Jesus regarded with especial tenderness and pity. We cannot confine our mirth to our own fireside : the spirit of Christ would reproach our merry-making if it left out of account the sore needs of the children of men. And at this time their needs are sore indeed. One thinks of the starving children on the Continent of Europe, the inmates of our homes and hospitals, the incurables. Surely our joy and gladness will be all the purer and all the sweeter for a kindly thought to such as these ! In past years THE QUIVER readers have been most generous, especially at this season of the year. Can I appeal once again for help ? There are details in our "Army of Helpers" pages and elsewhere which all my readers should study. Any sums which they may send I shall be most happy to distribute—and that without cost to the funds of these various charities.

It only remains for me to wish all my readers everywhere a bright and happy Christmastide, and this I do with all my heart. Please accept my very best wishes.

The Editor

Is Reunion Desirable ?

One of the greatest questions ever put before the Christian Church is the matter of Reunion. The recent Appeal issued by the Lambeth Conference gives rise to a new situation which all thoughtful people will study with interest.

Next month I am dealing with the subject in an article, "The Call for Christian Unity : Is Reunion Desirable ?"

This will be one of many special features in the January QUIVER.



"KEEPING WATCH"

A Christmas Message

By the Rev. John A. Hutton D.D.

We must remember that and take hold of the principle underlying it.

Revealed in Secret

The great truths about Christ are not made known broadcast and indiscriminately. The great truths about Christ are still revealed in secret to this one and to that one, here and there, and in every case only to one who has an ear for heavenly news, only to one who has a certain sensitiveness and welcome for those quiet and awful voices which make no noise in the world. In fact, the stories of the birth of Jesus as we have them particularly in S. Matthew and S. Luke support and enforce this very point of view. Those who knew that Jesus had been born were those who were on the look-out for some such beautiful gift from God. There were careless people living at that very time, breathing the same air as those shepherds—and they saw nothing and heard nothing and believed nothing. These might have declared, as against the evidence of the shepherds, that they, too, had been out that very night and that they had seen no portent in the sky. But I am almost sure that if anyone had asked them whether they had noticed *even so much as the sky* that night, they would have been compelled to confess that they had not thought of looking up. Well, people who never look up reverently at the sky must not be astonished if they do not see anything happening over their very heads.



"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."

HERE is one thing common to all the stories in the New Testament which describe the birth of Jesus. It is this. The fact that something wonderful was about to take place or had taken place in this world of ours was made known only to those people who were looking for something wonderful. The birth of Jesus was not made known to everybody at first, or even to many people. It became known only to a few, to one here and one there, and the thing common to all those who learned the secret was that they were either actually listening for it or were ready to hear it.

To the Expectant Eye

It was the same with the Resurrection of our Lord. The Risen Jesus did not in the first instance appear to everybody; but only to one here and one there. And you might say about every one of those to whom He appeared after His Resurrection, that that one was at the very moment thinking of Jesus, thinking what a sad difference His going away had made.

Well, something of the same secrecy and discrimination is observed in the story of the birth of Jesus. Not everyone becomes aware of what is happening or has happened, but one here and there, in different places; and in each case, the person to whom the secret is made known seems to us to have been on the tip-toe of expectation, waiting for it.

If you put all the stories together that gather round the cradle of Jesus, you will find, to say it once again, that in each case those who surmised that something wonderful had taken place, were in every case just those who were looking for something wonderful, or just those who were ready to welcome something wonderful. For example, there were the Shepherds of Bethlehem. That they were devout and simple-hearted men we may be sure from their behaviour first and last. When the great thing happened, it awakened in their souls

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an outburst of praise. They were astonished but they were not incredulous. Unlike us men of later days, they had not lost the faculty for wonder. They knew that they lived in a wonderful world, in a living world, in a world which, especially at night to those who are out under the stars, seems with difficulty to be keeping back some great secret. On that very night, the secret broke through, and for a blessed space of time, however short it was, the heavens were opened. But remember, it was to devout and simple souls who were looking upwards—that the voice spake and the vision was made clear!

Lift up Your Eyes

And now, if you read the story of that night, as it is told in S. Matthew's Gospel, you will have another illustration of this one point—which is my Christmas message. There we read of the wise men of the East who saw the star of Jesus and followed its course until it rested over Bethlehem. Now, once again, you cannot see the star of Jesus, you cannot see any star at all, unless you lift up your eyes. That is to say, the wise men of the East who learned the secret of the birth of Jesus were at the moment searching the heavens for a sign. There were countless people of the East who that night did not see the star of Jesus. But there were countless people of the East who that night did not see any star at all, for they were not looking for stars.



Lastly, looking back to the Story of S. Luke; there were others besides the Shepherds of Bethlehem who soon learned that the Saviour of the world had at length been born. There were Anna and Simeon. We read that the moment they saw the little baby in the Temple, they knew who He was, and they lifted up their hearts in words of praise which this Christmas-tide will be sung through all the world. Now of Anna and of Simeon, the same is true as of the shepherds and of the wise men: they saw Jesus because they were looking for Him.



And notice this also. In each case those who discovered Jesus did not need to be doing anything very wonderful in order to see Him. Indeed, the beautiful thing which I wish to believe is that it was when they were doing just what they were in the habit of doing, but doing it with a living and tender faith in the ancient promises of God, that the vision of Jesus the Saviour of the world broke upon them. The shepherds were busy at their nightly work; the wise men were busy at their studies; Anna and Simeon were in their regular place of wor-

ship, when it dawned upon them that into this world of ours God had sent forth His Son.

No Need to Climb the Mountain

Perhaps that is still the attitude which gives the best chance of seeing Jesus. We do not need to climb some tremendous mountain and look up with haggard eyes to feel the truth of the great Christmas mystery. Let us be engaged in our daily work, in our daily studies (if that be our calling) or in the regular worship of God's house. But, wherever we are, let us feed our souls with the ancient promises of God. Let us try to see the whole of this life of ours always with the wonder and the simplicity of children.



The Quotation

*Earth breaks up, time drops away,
In flows heaven, with its new day
Of endless life, when He who trod,
Very man and very God,
This earth in weakness, shame and pain,
Dying the death whose signs remain
Up yonder on the accursed tree,
Shall come again, no more to be
Of captivity the thrall,
But the one God, All in all,
King of kings, Lord of lords,
As His servant John received the words,
"I died, and live for evermore!"*

CHRISTMAS EVE.



Prayer

*O Thou Who faintest not neither art weary,
Who art ever devising ways and means by
which we Thy forgetful children may turn to
Thee, or, having fallen away, may turn again:
we praise Thee for this most tender appeal
which we are aware of as the time draws nigh
the birth of Christ.*

*That Thou in high heaven shouldest think on us
at all; that Thou shouldest think on us
without displeasure and reproach, though these
had been our proper portion; that Thou
shouldest approach us in the things of Bethle-
hem and Nazareth, and enter our life by a
lowly door: we give Thee thanks and bless
Thy Holy Name.*

*Help us, O Lord, to take to ourselves from
the story of Christ's coming such lessons as
we severally most need: and help us all to
cast out of our hearts any harsh or bitter or
unbelieving mood concerning this human life of
ours, remembering that Jesus breathed the air
we breathe, and tasted on our behalf both life
and death, lest we should be weary and faint
in our minds. Amen.*

The "ROBERTSON" Recipes

A new series of delightful
table dainties.

The high food value of Mincemeat has won for it a regular place in the kitchen, not merely at Xmas time for the Mince Pies, but all the year round as an ingredient for the table "sweets." Many delightful dishes can be made with it—try these:

PRINCE'S PUDDING.

One stale madeira cake. Fruit Syrup (or Sherry, if preferred) and enough milk to make cake moist but not wet. Scoop out centre of cake, leaving a wall one inch thick. Pour the milk over.

Mix crumbs with half-pound Robertson's Mincemeat and the fruit Syrup. Fill the cake with the mixture and serve.

If wanted hot, steam in a colander in dish it is to be served in.

"EL GRECO."

Eight slices toasted stale bread. Half-pound Robertson's Mincemeat. Four spoonfuls Golden Syrup. Butter the toast. Spread it with syrup. Arrange in pie-dish in layers with Robertson's Mincemeat between each layer. Make a custard with one egg and half a pint of milk. Sweeten to taste. Pour over toast. Dust with spice. Bake golden brown in moderate oven. Serve. (Reduce quantities in proportion for smaller dish.)

ROBERTSON'S "GOLDEN SHRED" MINCEMEAT is specially recommended for its high quality and purity. It is made "just like home-made," prepared and blended by experts.

Further Recipes will be published here—cut them out and retain for reference.

Goodness — Purity — Quality

ROBERTSON'S *Golden Shred Brand* MINCE MEAT

has nothing left out which ought to be in—every ingredient that good mince-meat should contain is included.

And nothing inferior is ever put in—the absolute best alone is used.

Insist on ROBERTSON'S
— Ask your Grocer!

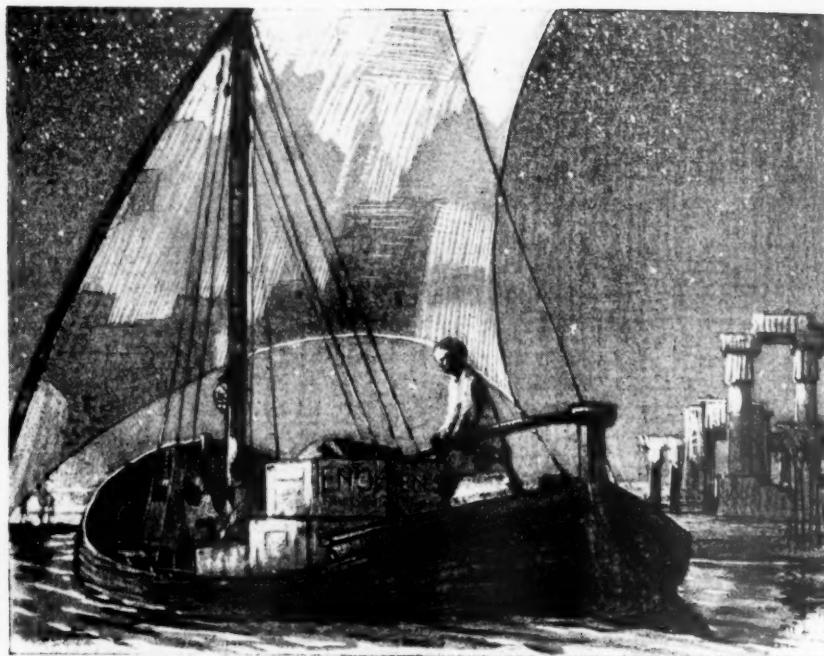


Think what this means to you

Endowment Investment on the "British Dominions" plan offers so many substantial advantages that it is at least unwise not to investigate the proposition. To do so will not commit you in any way. Here, briefly, are some of the benefits:

- (1) Relief up to 3/- in the £ is allowed by the Income Tax authorities on instalments paid for the year.
- (2) Every premium paid, in addition to securing the Income Tax rebate, goes to build up a substantial capital sum for retirement in say 10, 20 or 25 years.
- (3) In the event of death before the Investment matures the whole of the capital sum together with the profits due to date is paid to the person or persons entitled thereto without liability for further premiums.
- (4) The Investment can be realised for cash on a liberal scale after the first two annual premiums have been paid.
- (5) Substantial profits on capital sum assured are added.
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Full particulars of this—the premier and most secure form of investment—will gladly be sent upon request to EAGLE, STAR & BRITISH DOMINIONS INSURANCE COMPANY, LIMITED (Life Department), 32 Moorgate Street, London, E.C.2. Head Office: British Dominions House, Royal Exchange Avenue, London, E.C.3. West End Branch: 79 Pall Mall, S.W.1. Branches and Agents throughout the United Kingdom. The most progressive office for all classes of Insurance. Assets exceed £19,000,000.



**The dhows that sail the
rivers and the coastal
waters of the East carry
no freights more wel-
come, or, to climate-tried
men, more precious than
ENO**

THE dominion of ENO knows no race, no flag, no boundaries—it extends to all peoples, so great is its fame as a health-giver. It has something in common with the sunlight, because everybody is the better for it, whether it be taken merely as an invigorating, refreshing health beverage, or for the maintenance of healthful conditions of body. ENO does not take the place of pure air and exercise—it completes their good work.



They drink Health who drink

ENO'S FRUIT SALT

Price 3/- per bottle

The words "ENO" and "Fruit Salt" are our registered Trade Marks, and have been known for half a century to denote the preparation of J. C. ENO, Ltd., "Fruit Salt" Works, London, S.E.

ENO is sold by Chemists and Stores throughout the world. If you have any difficulty in obtaining regular supplies, please send us the name and address of your nearest Chemist or Store.

NEEDLECRAFT

A Dainty Tea- Table Set

The Tea Cloth

USE "Peri-Lusta" Crochet, No. 30, and a steel hook, No. 5 or $5\frac{1}{2}$.

ABBREVIATIONS.—ch., chain; ss., slip-stitch; dc., double crochet; tr., treble; dr., double treble; sp., space; pt., picot.

For each MALTESE CROSS begin with a ring of 10 ch.

1st round.—3 ch. (for one tr.), then 31 tr. into the ring.

2nd round.—4 ch. (it must be understood that the first three of the ch. in every round till further notice are to serve for one tr.), 1 tr. in both loops at the top of the next tr., * 1 ch., 1 tr. in the next tr. of the ring; repeat from * twenty-nine times and finish with 1 ch., 1 ss. into the third of the first four ch.

3rd round.—Ss. into the first sp. of the last round, 6 ch., 1 tr. in the ch. before the next tr., 1 ch. and 1 tr. into the next sp. eight times, * 3 ch., 1 tr. into the same place as the last made tr., 1 ch. and 1 tr. into the next sp. eight times; repeat from * twice but finish, after the seventh tr., with 1 ch., 1 ss. into the third of the first six ch. Always begin a round with 1 ss. into the corner loop of ch.

4th round.—8 ch., 1 tr. in the loop of three ch. of the last round, 1 ch. and 1 tr. nine times, * 5 ch., 1 tr. into the sp. of three ch., 1 ch. and 1 tr. nine times; repeat from * and finish with 1 ss. into the third of the first eight ch.

*Tea Cloth, Doyley and Serviette
By Ellen T. Masters*

5th round.—10 ch., 1 tr. in the corner loop, 1 ch. and 1 tr. ten times, * 7 ch., 1 tr. in the corner, 1 ch. and 1 tr. ten times; repeat from * and finish with 1 ss. into the third of the first ten ch.

6th round.—12 ch., 1 tr. in the corner loop, 1 ch. and 1 tr. eleven times, * 9 ch., 1 tr. in the corner, 1 ch. and 1 tr. eleven times; repeat from * and finish with 1 ss. into the third of the first twelve ch.

7th round.—14 ch., 1 tr. in the corner, 1 ch. and 1 tr. twelve times, * 11 ch., 1 tr. in the corner, 1 ch. and 1 tr. twelve times; repeat from * and finish as usual with 1 ss.

8th round.—16 ch., 1 tr. in the corner, 1 ch. and 1 tr. thirteen times, * 13 ch., 1 tr. in the corner, 1 ch. and 1 tr. fourteen times; repeat from * and finish with 1 ss. as usual.

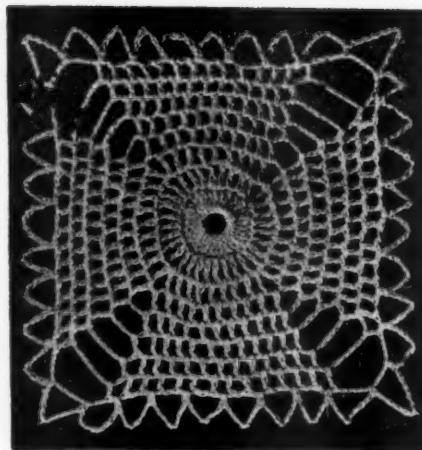
9th round.—Ss. back into the sp. between the last two tr. of preceding round (to work thus, take the hook out of the loop, put it into the sp. and draw the last loop through rather loosely), 8 ch., 1 dc. into the corner loop, 11 ch., 1 dc. in the same loop, 8 ch., 1 dc. in the next sp., * 8 ch., miss two tr., 1 dc. in the next sp.; repeat from * four times, then 8 ch., 1 dc. in the corner, 11 ch., 1 dc. in the same loop, 8 ch., 1 dc. in the next sp.; repeat from * all round, finishing with 1 ss. on the top of the first ss. of the round. Fasten off.

When making further squares link the eight loops of eight ch. round one edge to those on one side of the next detail. After

THE QUIVER

the fourth ch. of every side loop take out the hook, put it into the corresponding loop of the previously made square and draw the last chain through, work 4 ch. and complete the loop with a dc. as usual. For the corner the last square of one side and the first of the next side are joined at right angles.

In the model tea-cloth there were thirteen squares along each side exclusive of the corners, thus making fifty-six details in all.



Showing clearly the detailed working of the Maltese design

The Straight Edge

For the HEADING, or straight edge of the lace, work the following three rounds:

1st round.—* 1 dtr. in the first free loop of a square, 5 ch., 1 tr. in the next loop, 5 ch., 1 tr. in the next loop, 5 ch. and 1 dc. into each of the next four loops, 5 ch., 1 tr. into the next loop, 5 ch., 1 tr. in the next loop, 5 ch., 1 dtr. in the next loop, 5 ch.; repeat from the beginning of the round into every square in turn. In the angles work 5 ch., 1 dtr. into the large loop at the point of a corner square, then 5 ch. and repeat from * as usual.

2nd round.—* 1 tr. into the first loop, 2 ch., 1 tr. into the same loop; repeat from * into every loop in turn and in the angles omit the two ch. between the pairs of tr.

3rd round.—2 tr. into every space between the tr. of the last round. In the angles miss two pairs of tr.

The Reverse Edge

Work as follows for the FOOT of the lace:

1st round.—Like the 1st round of the heading till the corner loop is reached, in which work 2 dtr. with 5 ch. between them and before and after them.

2nd round.—Like the 2nd round of the heading. In the corner loop work 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr., 5 ch., 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr.

3rd round.—5 ch., 2 dtr. (the upper loops worked off together), 4 ch. and 1 dc., all into the same sp. between tr., * 5 ch., miss

three tr., 3 dtr., the upper loops worked off together as before, 4 ch. and 1 dc., all into the same sp.; repeat from * In the corner loop work three groups of dtr., as at the sides. Arrange so that there are a hundred sets of dtr. between the corners.

4th round.—1 dc.,

* 7 ch., 1 dc. on the top of a group of dtr.; repeat from * all round and in the middle of the three groups in the corner loop work 1 dc., 7 ch. and 1 dc.

5th round.—* 1 tr.,

2 ch., 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr., all into one loop, 2 ch.; repeat from * and in the corner work 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr., 5 ch., 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr.

6th round.—1 dc., * 5 ch., miss one sp., 1 dc.; repeat from * all round and in the corner work 1 dc., 5 ch., 1 dc. into the same loop.

7th round.—Work 6 tr. all into the corner loop, then * 8 ch., 1 dc. into the next loop, 5 ch., 1 dc. into the next loop three times, then 3 ch., 6 tr. into the next loop; repeat from *.

8th round.—* 1 tr. on tr., 1 ch., 1 tr. on tr., 5 ch. and 1 dc. in the following loop three times; repeat from *.

9th round.—Work as in the 8th round, but put 2 ch. instead of 1 ch. between the tr. on the group.

10th round.—1 dc. in the first small sp. between tr., 5 ch., 1 dc. in the next sp., 1 dc., 5 ch. and 1 dc. in the next sp., 1 dc. in the next sp., 9 ch., catch the last of these ch. back to the second dc. of the scallop, that is, the dc. after the first loop of 5 ch.

In the loop thus made, work 3 dc., 5 ch., 3 dc., 5 ch., 3 dc., 5 ch., 3 dc., 1 dc. into the sp. whence this large loop was begun, 5 ch., 1 dc. into the next sp. Now work 5 ch., 5 tr., 5 ch. and 5 tr. into the middle loop of five ch., 5 ch.; repeat from the beginning of the round.

The Lace Doyley

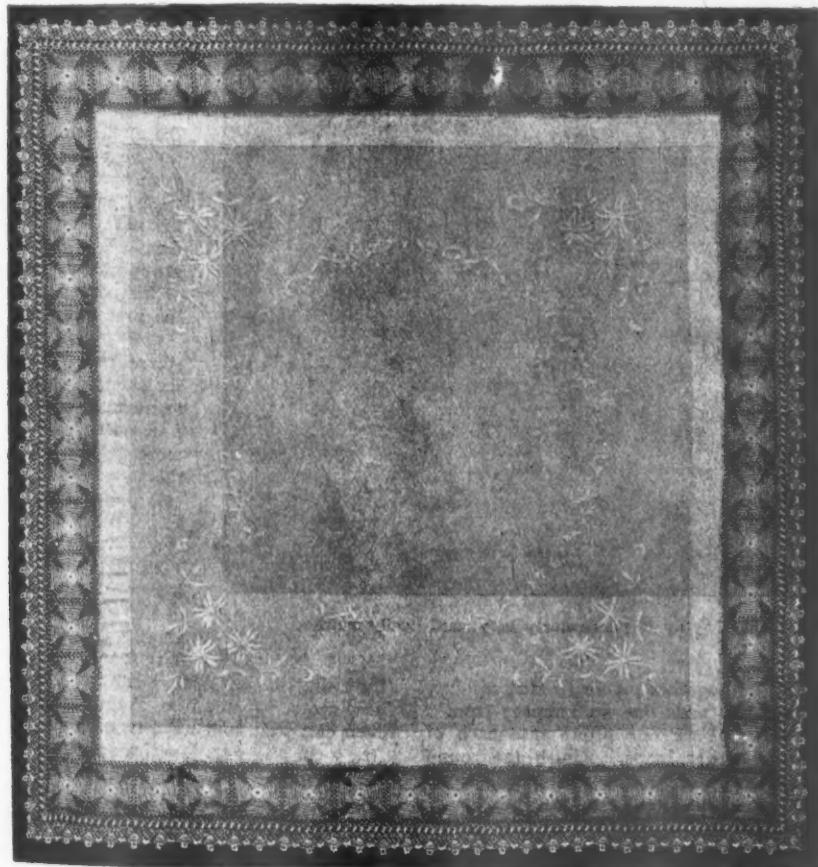
THIS little doyley can claim an uncommon effect in having an eight-sided centre instead of the more usual square or round. The pattern of the lace lends itself quite well to one of these two shapes also if an octagon of damask is found difficult to make or to obtain. The model was pretty and frilly in effect and would bear starching to make it keep its place.

Clark's Crochet Cotton, No. 40, with a fine steel hook makes a very lacy and effective edging. The model doyley was made rather coarser in order that the pattern might show itself off more clearly in the illustration.

If an eight-sided centre is chosen, about three inches across, turn down the edges to the wrong side. Take a large needle and pierce holes first through both layers of the folded material at each point. Make three more holes between every two corners—thirty-two holes in all.

1st round.—In one of the points work 1 tr., 5 ch., 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr., * 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr. in the next hole; repeat from * to the next point, where work 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr., 5 ch., 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr., then repeat from * all round, and finish with 1 tr. in the point, 2 ch., 1 ss. into the first tr.

2nd round.—Ss. into the loop of five ch., 6 ch. (the first three to serve as one tr.), 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr. also into the first loop, * 2 ch., 1 tr. into the next sp. between tr.;



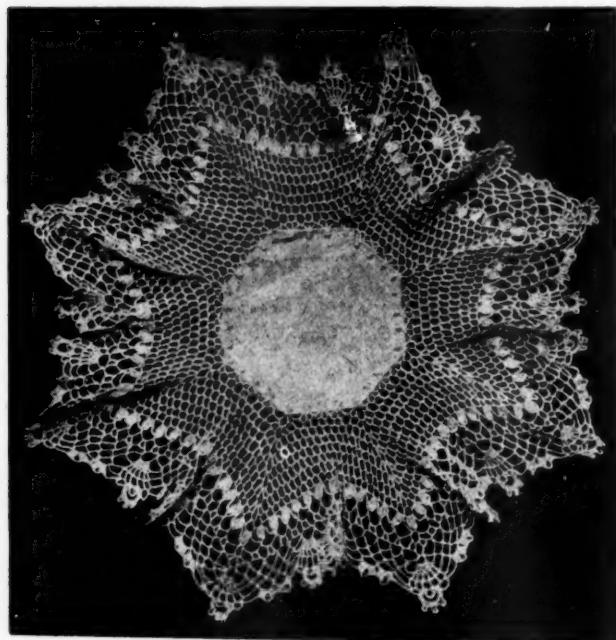
As the Tea Cloth should look when finished

THE QUIVER

repeat from * to the corner and in the loop of five ch., work 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr., 5 ch., 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr., then repeat from the first * all round, finishing as usual with 1 ss. into the third of the first six ch.

Work six more rounds like the 2nd round. It will be noted that the number of sp. increases in every round, so that in the 8th round there are twenty-seven, exclusive of the loops of five ch. in each angle.

9th round.—Ss. into the middle of the loop of five ch., 4 ch. (to serve as one dtr.), 2 dtr. into the loop (the top loops should be worked off together), 4 ch., 1 dc. into the same loop of ch., * 5 ch., 2 dtr.



The Dooley is particularly lacy, and easily worked

(worked off together), 4 ch., 1 dc., all into the next sp., miss one sp.; repeat from * all round. Work one group into each of the three corner loops. Finish the round by making 3 dtr. in the first of the three corner sp., then 4 ch., 1 ss. into the top of the first group.

10th round.—1 dc. at the top of the corner group, 5 ch., 1 dc. in the same place,

* 7 ch., 1 dc. at the top of the next group; repeat from * till the next point is reached, in which work 1 dc., 5 ch., 1 dc.; then repeat from the first * all round.

11th round.—Ss. into the corner loop, 8 ch. (the first three for one tr.), 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr. into the corner loop, * 2 ch., 1 tr. in the loop of seven ch., 2 ch., 1 tr. in the same place; repeat from * to the point, where work 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr., 5 ch., 1 tr., 2 ch., 1 tr.; repeat from the first * all round.

12th round.—After the last corner space ss. into the middle of the loop of five ch., 1 dc., 5 ch., 1 dc. into the same loop, * 7 ch., miss one space, 1 dc.; repeat from

* to the next point, in the middle loop of which work 1 dc., 5 ch., 1 dc., then continue as usual.

13th round.—Ss. in to the corner loop, then 6 tr. (make three ch. for the first of these), * 3 ch., 1 dc. in the next loop of ch., 7 ch. and 1 dc. four times, 3 ch., 6 tr. in the next loop; repeat from *. Work a group of 6 tr. in each of the corner loops of the preceding round.

14th round.—1 tr. (three ch. will serve for this), 1 ch., 1 tr. in next tr., 1 ch. and 1 tr. on tr., four times more, * 5 ch., 1 dc. in the next loop of seven ch., 7 ch. and 1 dc. three times more, 5 ch., 1 tr., 1 ch. and 1 tr. five times (that is: 1 tr. on each tr. of the group); repeat from * all round.

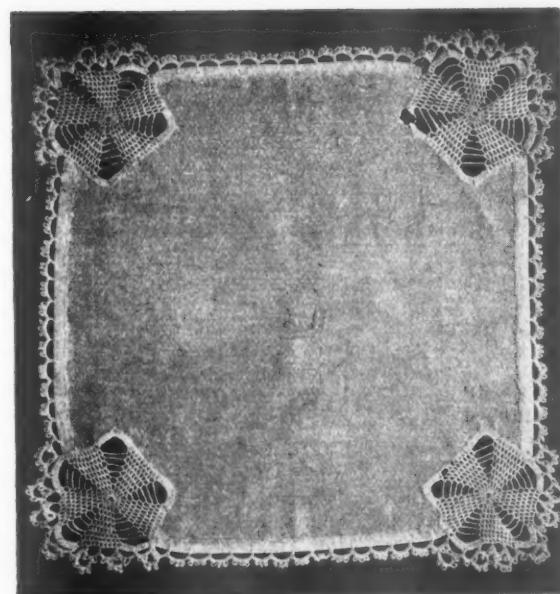
15th round.—1 tr. (three ch.), 2 ch., 1 tr., 3 ch. and 1 tr. four times more, * 5 ch., 1 dc. in the next loop of seven ch., 7 ch. and 1 dc. twice more, 5 ch., 1 tr., 2 ch. and 1 tr. five times; repeat from * all round.

16th round.—1 dc. in the first sp. between tr., 5 ch., 1 dc. in next sp., 1 dc. in next sp., 5 ch., 1 dc. in the same sp., 1 dc. in next sp., 9 ch., catch the last of these ch.

back to the dc. after the first loop of five ch. In the loop thus made, work 3 dc., 5 ch. (to form a pt.), 3 dc., 5 ch., 3 dc., 5 ch., 3 dc., then 1 dc. into the sp. whence this large loop was begun, 5 ch., 1 dc. into the next sp. Now work 5 ch., 3 tr., 3 ch. and 3 tr. into the next loop of seven ch., 3 tr., 3 ch. and 3 tr. into the next loop, 5 ch. and repeat from the beginning of the round.

In the model there were two groups of tr. and pt. loops between each two points of the eight-sided centre.

When the crochet is done, work small bosses of satin stitch at the base of each group of tr. that was put into the damask for the first round. Large French knots would also serve to give this finished look to the doyley.



The Serviette is most attractive in its daintiness

Serviette to Match the Cloth

THE dainty trimming for the serviette could well be used for handkerchiefs if worked with finer cotton still. Such an uncommon and novel little piece of crochet would be very welcome as a Christmas gift and has the extra advantage of being easily packed and cheaply sent—no mean merit in these days of expensive postage.

MATERIALS.—Coats's Crochet Cotton, No. 40, and an all-steel hook, No. 5½.

Make a ring of 8 ch.

1st round.—3 ch., 14 tr. into the ring, 1 ss. into the first three ch.

2nd round.—6 ch. (the first three to serve as usual for one tr.), 1 tr. into the first tr., * 1 ch., 1 tr. in the next tr., 1 ch., 1 tr. in the next tr., 1 ch., 1 tr. in the next tr., as the last tr., 3 ch., 1 tr. in the same tr. as the last tr., 1 ch., 1 tr. in the next tr.; repeat from * all round and finish with 1 ss. in the third of the first six ch. There should be five groups of 4 ch.

3rd round.—8 ch. (the first three for one tr. as usual), 1 tr. into the corner sp., * 1 ch., 1 tr. in the sp. between two tr.; repeat from * twice, 1 ch. For the corner

work 1 tr., 5 ch., 1 tr. and repeat from the first * all round, finishing with 1 ss.

4th round.—10 ch., * 1 tr. into the corner hole, 1 ch. and 1 tr. four times, 1 ch., 1 tr. in the corner, 7 ch.; repeat from * all round and finish as usual with 1 ss.

5th round.—12 ch., * 1 tr. into the corner, 1 ch. and 1 tr. five times, 1 ch., 1 tr. in the corner, 9 ch.; repeat from * all round, join with 1 ss.

6th round.—14 ch., * 1 tr. in the corner, 1 ch. and 1 tr. six times, 1 ch., 1 tr. into the corner, 11 ch.; repeat from * all round, finishing with 1 ss. as usual.

7th round.—16 ch., * 1 tr. into the corner loop, 1 ch. and 1 tr. seven times, 1 ch., 1 tr. into the corner, 13 ch.; repeat from * finishing with 1 ss. as usual.

8th round.—18 ch., * 1 tr. into the corner, 1 ch. and 1 tr. eight times, 1 ch. and 1 tr. in the corner, 15 ch.; repeat from * finishing the round as usual.

9th round.—3 ch. (for one tr.), 9 tr., 3 ch., to tr. all into the corner loop, * 1 ch., 1 tr. into the next sp., 1 ch., 1 tr. into the next sp.; repeat from * to the corner hole in which put 10 tr., 3 ch. and 10 tr.; repeat from the first * all round and finish with 1 ss. as usual.

THE QUIVER

Making-up the Serviette

Make three more of these five-sided designs, then prepare the serviette itself. Cut it out of soft linen or cambric, or use a small handkerchief. It should be about nine inches square. Fold down each corner slantwise so that the edge is two inches and a half long. Upon each of these folds place one of the crochet devices, allowing three scallops of tr. to set out beyond the sides of the linen square, the remaining two being on the material. Hem down this part of the crochet, carrying the securing stitches along three sets of tr. and ch. sp. and two sets of ch. only. Then cut away the linen from under this part of the device and the result will be as is plainly shown in the illustration.

The Border

The following border is next to be carried all round the square (I am supposing that this is already hemmed). Pierce holes in the hem with a large needle three-eighths of an inch apart and about an eighth of an inch from the margin.

Now work the crochet.

1st round.—Begin in the second hole pierced in the edge of the serviette, 1 dc. (work loosely to avoid puckering the linen), * 9 ch., 1 dc. in the next hole; repeat from

* all along, the last dc. being in the first tr. of the thick loop of the crochet corner. Then, for the corner work 9 ch., 1 dc. in the pt. between tr., 9 ch., 1 dc. into the last tr. of the group, 9 ch., miss three tr., 1 dc., 9 ch., miss two tr., 1 dc., 9 ch., 1 dc. into the first tr. of the next group, 9 ch., 1 dc. into the pt., 9 ch., 1 dc. in the last tr. and the first hole of the cambric; repeat from the first *.

2nd round.—* 3 dc., 5 ch., 3 dc., 5 ch., 3 dc. all into the first ch. loop along the side of the serviette. Work thus into every loop in turn till the first loop over the tr. of the corner device is reached, 3 dc., 5 ch. (forming one pt.), 1 dc., 9 ch., catch the last of these ch. back to the dc. between two pts. of the preceding loop. Into the loop thus made work 3 dc., 1 pt., 3 dc., 1 pt., 3 dc., 1 pt., 3 dc. Into the half-finished loop of ch. work 1 dc., 1 pt., 3 dc.; repeat from * along the next side, then round the corner as before.

There should be thirteen simple loops along each side of the serviette and seven triple loops round each of the corner designs.

If the serviette is not hem-stitched, work a row of French knots along the sides.

Woollies for Destitute Children

Next month our Needlecraft Section will be devoted specially to the making of garments—both in Knitting and Crochet—for the destitute children in the devastated areas of Europe. The "Save the Children Fund" is appealing urgently for warm clothing of every description. Will our readers help by making up at least one of the garments—for which instructions will be given—and forwarding it to the Fund?

A Special Competition is also being arranged, in which prizes will be awarded for Knitting a Pair of Child's Socks. All entries will be forwarded direct from THE QUIVER Office to the Fund. Full particulars will appear in the

January number.

Colonial and Continental Church Society

9 Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, E.C.4

"If it be right, in accordance with our Saviour's commands, to preach the Gospel to the heathen, there is an equally great obligation upon us to preach the Gospel to our fellow-countrymen scattered abroad in the far places of the Empire."

ARE YOU HELPING ?

Secretary: The Rev. J. D. MULLINS,
9 Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, E.C.4.

Bankers: BARCLAYS BANK.

IF YOU HAD

300

CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS

TO FILL ON CHRISTMAS EVE
it would cause you some anxiety, perhaps.

IF YOU HAD

Three Hundred Children

constantly to feed, clothe and educate, you
would find the problem still bigger.

WE HAVE THIS NUMBER OF FATHERLESS LITTLE ONES

to care for, and to try somehow this month to
help them to realise what Christmas should
mean. Our yearly expenses amount to over
£18,000, and our regular subscriptions amount
only to £5,000. To meet this great difference
we need your generous help. Will you assist
us this Christmastide as freely as you can, to
carry on our good work on behalf of the

ORPHANS OF THIS COUNTRY?

Nearly one-third of our large family are "War
Orphans." Their fathers died for us.

YOU WILL BE HAPPIER THIS CHRISTMAS if you send a gift for these children, to

The Secretary :

**ORPHAN WORKING SCHOOL
& ALEXANDRA ORPHANAGE,
73 CHEAPSIDE, LONDON, E.C.2.**

THE SALVATION ARMY

SEEKS OUT LOST SOULS. Its
Officers carry the Gospel of God's
Love seven days a week, to the Out-
cast everywhere. At the same time
it gives material help, where needed.

ADMITS WITHOUT CREED-TESTS
to its Shelters and Institutions.

SENDS MISSIONARIES TO ALL
PEOPLES. It preaches the Gospel
in 42 languages in 70 different
countries.

ACTS IN CONCERT WITH THE
CHURCHES. It is not a competing
Church, but the Handmaid of all the
Churches. Without its aid much of
the Churches' Work would be in vain.

HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED, and should be sent
to **GENERAL BRAMWELL BOOTH**, 101 Queen Vic-
toria Street, London, E.C.4. Cheques should be crossed
"Bank of England, Law Courts Branch."

UNEMPLOYMENT AND DISTRESS

**THE
CHURCH ARMY**
is bearing its share in the fight against
STARVATION & COLD
by its well-tried non-pauperising methods.

**PLEASE SEND A
CHRISTMAS GIFT
FOR THE
POOR AND NEEDY
SICK AND AGED**

WE ASK YOUR SUPPORT in our NATIONAL
EFFORTS to cope with DISTRESS, and for our many
branches of SOCIAL & EVANGELISTIC WORK.

Cheques crossed "Barclays, a/c Church Army," payable
to **PРЕBENDARY CARLILE, D.D., Hon. Chief
Secretary, Headquarters, Bryanston Street, Marble Arch,
London, W.1.**

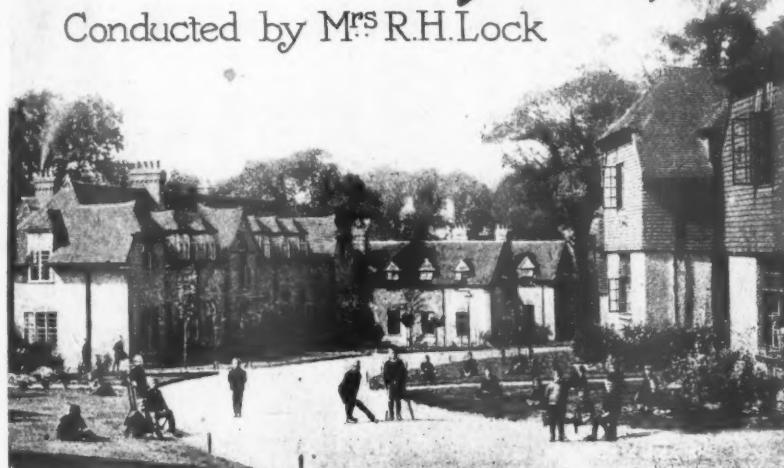
BEECHAM'S PILLS

The verdict of the people—the unchangeable opinion of the majority, who have found that their health is improved and maintained by taking Beecham's Pills—is in favour of that medicine as the Common Sense Remedy for dyspepsia, biliousness, constipation and derangements of the digestive system in general. There is no disputing the great value of Beecham's Pills—

WORTH A GUINEA A BOX.

The Quiver Army of Helpers

Conducted by Mrs R.H.Lock



In the Barnardo Boys' Garden City

MY DEAR HELPERS,—Christmas numbers, like Christmas puddings, are made a good time ahead; but it is not difficult to visualize the conditions under which they will appear. I see in imagination the gaily-decked paper stalls, on which they will flaunt their cheerful covers, tempting us to "come inside," and the streets and shops busy with infectious excitement. How often we start with a cool determination "not to make much of Christmas this year." Times are bad, money is scarce, we are all getting too old. And then, in the last few days, we suddenly feel out of it.

Christmas Cheer

We remember the small cousins who must have something, and as they will be staying with Aunt Jane she must have something; and finally we are the worst delinquents of all, for we crowd all our shopping into the last feverish hours. And we emerge a little exhausted, but rather happy, all the same, with numbers of attractive parcels to undo and tie up again in the evenings with the satisfying anticipation of the pleasure they will give. Yes; we had better face it and plunge gladly into

the stream of Christmas cheer, for it will overflow its banks and have us in any case!

I think that a good deal of what one might call "Christmas reluctance" is due to the sad memories that are inseparable from all anniversaries. Especially since the war the empty places speak with more heartrending insistence at such times than at others, and we who have suffered so much pain—who still suffer it every day and almost every hour—shrink from these reminders of the happiness that has gone out of our lives. But that is probably wrong. We would not, if we could, forget them, and even in the saddest memories there is much happiness. If we could develop our imaginations to the full, I suppose we should be able to live over again those days of complete reunion in all their gaiety. But the Christmas gifts that we would have given—there is the pang again. Our natural impulse is to give that money to charity, and THE QUIVER Helpers have a great choice of truly appealing needs.

Helping the Seamen

Do you want directly to help the men who brought us peace at this season of "Peace

THE QUIVER

on Earth"? Then there is no more magnificent way of doing so than by putting a brick in the proposed hostel for seamen in the Port of London. We with comfortable homes and clubs need to bestir our imaginations to realize what it must mean to leave one's ship and have to trust for hospitality to the mean and sordid streets and lodging-houses of Dockland, and, having escaped the dangers of the deep, to have to keep alert to avoid the still more deadly perils of the land shark. The Merchant Service covered itself with glory during the war; but glory is not weatherproof. We must give the Merchant Service a more substantial souvenir: a cheerful, warm, and comfortable refuge from wind and wickedness, a home of which the men will think in the long days and nights at sea, and for which they will bless the women of the Empire whom they so nobly serve. Our debt is not paid so long as that home is wanting.

A "Quiver" Room

I am sorry to say there have been very few donations to the Fund of late. For the benefit of new readers let me state that we are trying to raise a sum of £250 for a "QUIVER Room" in the hostel. THE QUIVER Helpers were so generous in sending old silver, etc., in the earlier days of the Silver Thimble Fund that I can quite believe that their treasure cupboards are nearly empty. But will they please have another look or send a money gift, and will new readers ransack drawers and shelves for anything and everything saleable for the seamen? A thousand thanks in anticipation.

Save the Children

It is, as I have said, natural to many to want to make a Christmas offering to the men who won the war, but when that has been done there are others who have a special claim on us at this season—I mean, of course, the children. And the Army of Helpers, being mainly an army of women, has naturally taken the children very much under its wing.

Last month I wrote an appeal for the **SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND**. Its needs, I hear, are greater than ever. I was speaking to a prominent banker the other day. He touched on the possibility of "re-starting" Austria. Picture what it means to "re-start" a country of several million in-

habitants; picture their plight in the meantime—before a beginning has even been made. He confirmed my worst fears for the famine-stricken populations.

Christmas will be a Mercy to Them

The thought is abominable. If THE QUIVER readers, one and all, would make

A Christmas Dinner Collection for the Starving Children.

I feel sure—well, that it would, at any rate, aid their digestions! If any have had doubts about helping "foreigners," surely the season of "goodwill towards men" (not specifically Englishmen) should dissipate them.

Then, when we have helped the roving seamen and the babies of other lands, we have two families of Home Children who deserve—most truly deserve—a little Christmas remembrance. One is

Dr. Barnardo's Great Family of "Nobody's Children"

I always feel that he relieved us of a great responsibility by founding the Homes, but he did not relieve us of the responsibility of supporting them. THE QUIVER takes a special interest in that magnificent branch of the work—the Garden City Homes. Some months ago we appealed to our readers to raise enough to endow a QUIVER bed in the Boys' Garden City at Woodford Bridge in Essex. So far only about £92 has been received. I am most anxious that we shall successfully carry through our project, but we must close the fund at the end of the year, and £500 is needed. Will you all help? To my mind it is most inspiring to support a movement that is so unmistakably doing the best that can possibly be done, morally and physically, to make of the stranded slum boy a fine and competent citizen.

The other family whom THE QUIVER takes under its wing lives in the House on the Hill—in other words, REEDHAM ORPHANAGE. Poor little handicapped people, they are learning to face the world bravely, to "fight the good fight." They work well, they play well; they will, I hope, enjoy their Christmas well. I need not "rub in" the increased expenses of running the Orphanage; helpers will retort that no home is exempt from heavier burdens, and this is too true. But if I am too great a beggar, I at least beg for those less fortunate than ourselves;

"THE QUIVER" ARMY OF HELPERS

that is my excuse, or perhaps my justification. In wishing every one of my kind and generous helpers

A Very Happy Christmas.

I have the comfortable feeling that not only will they not bear me any ill-will, but that they will to the utmost extent of their powers respond to my appeals and "carry on" their great record of unselfishness and noble effort.

Kind Thoughts

I have to record many thoughtful acts which were greatly appreciated. The young girl going out to work, whom I mentioned in the September number, found two good friends. One sent a useful black dress for her, the other prefaced her kind gifts by sending me the following charming letter:

"Looking through the September number of THE QUIVER Army of Helpers," I see one instance where help is needed for a young girl just going out to work with regard to clothes. Well, if I can help that particular case or anyone else that you know of through your helpers, I should like to do so. May I explain myself? I am a working girl myself in service, and know only too well what a struggle it is for many young girls just starting out in the world. I have a costume (rainproof) and several small things which are in good condition, only too small for me. I know no one personally who would be glad of them, so if you think you could find a girl who might need them I should be only too pleased to forward them on. I enjoy THE QUIVER myself, and think it does a tremendous amount of good."

Helping the Miserable

Another helper, who wished to be anonymous, sent a most generous gift of £2—£1 for the lady with a delicate husband and several children, and £1 for "wool or books for some lonely folk." What joy such gifts bring can best be gathered from the extracts printed below. The first is from a letter from the lady with the delicate husband referred to above:

"I feel quite unable to thank you for your kindness. I cannot tell you how much you have helped me. I was feeling utterly miserable when I arrived home this evening. I didn't know *how* I was going on the next week or two. You see, by the time I have paid the children's board and lodgings and my rent, I have practically nothing left, and have just to manage as well as I can. Can you imagine how I felt when I opened your letter?"

Here are some glimpses into sad and lonely lives that are very heartbreaking:

"Do you think any of you Army of Helpers would send me something to read? Any maga-

zines or books—anything that will help me to forget the pain which is almost past endurance at times? I am away in a most isolated spot, miles from town. I rent one room, and my whole and sole income is £26 per annum. After paying rent and coal, it leaves nothing to spare for books, magazines, or papers—in fact, scarcely enough for the barest of life's necessities. I am 55, a widow with not one relative living, utterly alone, and my complaint (an internal growth) is incurable. It would be such an act of Christian charity if someone would send me anything readable."

"I am an invalid, having been ill now sixteen years and spent a long time in bed. I would be grateful for old pieces of silk or velvet to make up for tea-cosies or cushion covers, as it all helps to wear away the time. The stories in THE QUIVER are splendid, and I am very interested in the fancy work. Books do brighten one up so when visitors are scarce."

Pleasure Passed On

The consumptive ex-Merchant Service man mentioned in the October number writes enthusiastically of a kind correspondent to whom the Army of Helpers introduced him. "Her letters I think a lot of," he says; "they are so cheery and they read as if we were having a personal talk instead of writing to each other. In addition to her letters, she sends me some magazines, and as I am fond of reading they make many an hour pass in pleasure."

Winnie E. Andrew, aged 14, sent a very welcome gift of magazines.

A friend indeed is another helper, who has consistently befriended a discharged soldier suffering from shell-shock, and recently took infinite trouble to procure a splendid supply of clothes for his baby. The poor man's health has broken down again, and his case is a very sad one. This helper and her sister also went to see Alfred Martin a week before his 19th birthday, and took him for a picnic.

A Word of Thanks

Miss Elsie Smith, 80, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, asks me to convey her hearty thanks to all the readers who so kindly sent her old Christmas cards and pieces for dressing dolls, and to say that she now has plenty to last her for quite a long time to come.

Answer to "Typist"

Women's Employment is published on the first and third Friday of every month, and its offices are at 5, Prince's Street, Cavendish Square, W.1.

THE QUIVER

More Appeals

I have not finished begging yet! I want:

1. Friends for a consumptive ex-hospital nurse in a Home at Bournemouth. She is lonely and sad. Among other trials, nearly all her clothes and other belongings were stolen recently.

2. Orders, "pieces," and baby ribbon for Mr. Dalton's needle-books and Dorothy bags. He is very sad at the slump in orders. All his little extra comforts are dependent on the money he earns in this way. Can anyone suggest a new line for him?

3. Beads, large and small, and odd pieces of necklace chains which could be made into long neck-chains by another inmate of the Home at Torquay suffering from consumption.

4. Bright books and magazines for numbers of invalids.

Copies of "The Quiver" Wanted

I have received a letter from the Hon. Secretary of the Ladies Association in connexion with the Colonial Correspondence League of the Colonial and Continental Church Society, appealing for copies of THE QUIVER which readers no longer require. She writes:

"It is a great boon to these distant sons and daughters of the Empire to receive interesting literature, and publications such as yours are only to be obtained from the 'Old Country.' One grateful dweller on the Prairies says, 'All papers received are passed from one to another as long as they hold together.'

"THE QUIVER is very much in demand. A settler from a part of British Columbia, now being opened up, writes: 'I will be delighted to receive one of the Old Country papers; when I was a young woman I used to get THE QUIVER and found it always delightful, and if it is not too much trouble would be glad to get it again.' If any of your readers would be willing to help in this work and post their copies overseas, I should be very glad to supply them with a settler's address."

I feel sure my readers will be only too ready to pass on any copies they may no longer require.

The Monthly Postbag

For most welcome contributions, gifts, and letters my heartiest thanks to the following:

Mrs. Clifford, "One who has read THE QUIVER for Thirty-five Years," "Lincolnshire Reader," Miss Harris, Mrs. H. A. Turner, Miss Braby, Mrs. Barrie, Mrs. Chandler, Mrs. Bayles, Miss Constance A. Bond, Miss Dixon, Miss B. L. White, Mrs. Carre, Mrs. Lowe, Mrs. J. Harrison, Mrs. Hargrave, Mrs. Murray, Mrs. Smith, Miss E. L. Wilson, Mrs. Flinn, Miss M. J. Martin, "A Sincere Well-wisher," Mrs. Fox-Thomas, Miss Scouloudi, Miss Houghton, Miss May Wilson, Mrs. Collingwood, Mrs. W. K. Bird, Miss E. Amey.

Will correspondents kindly sign their names very distinctly, and put Mr., Mrs. or Miss, or any other title, in order to assist us in sending an accurate acknowledgment?

Yours sincerely,

BELLA SIDNEY WOOLF

(MRS. R. H. LOCK).



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"The Quiver" Parliament

"Wanted: A Welsh Revival"
Some Opinions from Miners
and Others

A LARGE number of letters were received from readers on the article by our Special Commissioner in the October number. Many of them were from miners. The Prize of One Guinea is awarded to Mr. John Bailey, 25, Oakland Street, Mountain Ash, Glam., for the letter "Religion, not Revival" given below. Mr. Bailey is himself a miner and a Wesleyan preacher.

Extracts from some of the other letters received are also given.

Religion, not Revival

"DEAR Sir.—The tone of the article which appeared in the October number of *The Quiver*, namely, 'Wanted: A Welsh Revival,' suggests that the title should have been, 'Wanted: A Dope.'

"Most religious revivals that have taken place have merely been outbursts of emotionalism, and this is what most people mean when they speak of a revival.

"A religion is of little use if it depends for its progress upon occasional outbursts of religious feeling, as the result of the subjection of the powers of reason to those of emotion.

"Without attacking the Ministry, I am definitely of the opinion that if it was prepared to advocate Christianity in the same way that Socialists propagandists advocate Socialism—undertaking open-air work and answering questions, rather than leaving it to the occasional visits of Christian Evidence lecturers—a great deal of good would be done. The Welsh miner is not given credit for being over intelligent (little do some folks know him); that being so, could you not the more easily move a people like this rather than a people whose opinions are based on reason and upon whom an appeal to the emotions could have little effect? Yet to-day the Welsh people smile at any appeal to emotion while reason is ignored.

"One thing that is needed up and down the valleys of South Wales is a reasoned presentation of the case for Christianity, a quickening of the powers of reasoning.

"Are our ministers and lay preachers capable of undertaking such work? Such a revival would quicken the spiritual life of the people. Would this allay unrest? I answer emphatically, No!

"I attended a Labour Party conference in this district a few weeks ago. It surprised me in looking about me to see that quite 50 per cent. of those present were church workers. To these men religion was not dope any more than it had been to Paul and Silas who were accused of having turned the world upside down.

"Can you wonder at the unrest in the mining districts when housing conditions are as

they are? We can leave well alone the suggestion that miners earning £1,000 a year should be able to build their own houses. Whether miners earn this sum of money or not, they don't get it.

"It is not uncommon for three and four families to be living in the same house owing to the present shortage. It might be said in reply that the same housing conditions prevail elsewhere. I want to point out that bad housing is not of the same significance everywhere, though it always breeds discontent.

"A miner leaves home in the morning at six to get to his work at seven o'clock. He leaves the fresh air for the foul, the light for the darkness; he works in the heat, darkness and insanitary conditions of underground life.

"He has little time for talking; indeed, the work is too strenuous to permit his talking and working. After the hours of loneliness and of work under unpleasant conditions, what must be the effect on him when he comes home soaked with perspiration, dirty, tired and hungry to a house where he has scarcely room to move, little privacy and little comfort, then after washing having to dry his wet clothes in front of the fire in the living room? Even at its best home can afford little attraction for him when it is overcrowded and unhealthy. Does this breed contentment? What is needed here? Is it a religious revival so that such conditions will be tolerated? Should religion be a dope persuading him to suffer these things in silence in spite of their effect upon the health and morality of those who live there?

"If the Church, through its Ministry, had protested against the war with Russia it could not have proceeded for long. In this case the hundred millions wasted there might have been devoted to providing houses for the people, thus helping to allay this unrest.

"Perhaps the loss of respect for the Ministry has had the effect of lessening the church attendance. A higher standard of education is needed amongst the Ministry. In the mining valleys, as elsewhere, a minister has to meet people, a very large percentage of whom have studied works which the minister has had but little opportunity of studying.

"Challenge the minister of to-day to preach in the open air as did the minister of years ago and you will scarcely find one to accept it. Is it because the minister of to-day is less enthusiastic or courageous? I think not. The minister of to-day realizes that where his father could preach to a crowd he cannot, because during the last twenty years the standard of intelligence has advanced by leaps and bounds. To-day when preaching you cannot make statements based only upon evidence furnished by proof texts, you have to be able to substantiate what you say, especially when you have to deal with young people with a leaning toward economic determinism.

THE QUIVER

"The opinion of a growing number is that the Church has followed the flag more closely than it has the cross, and that we have spent more effort in trying to persuade the masses to be content in the midst of wrong conditions than we have in warning the rich to avoid taking the risk of being unable to pass the test of the needle's eye. Religion estimates worth according to soul values, while modern society has the greater regard for bank balances. Wrong seems at present to be on top, while truth is at the bottom. Religion should not acquiesce nor offer a dope to keep society as it is to-day, but should be the force turning it upside down in order that truth, justice and love might come into their rightful position.

"Religion is the solution of all unrest and not revival dope.

"Mountain Ash.

"JOHN BAILEY."

Pure Selfishness

"SIR.—There is no doubt at all the trade unions are now as mischievous as they formerly were useful; it is, as George Eliot said, the other swing of the pendulum, and so the men are now going to their selfish extreme, just as the capitalists did before the advent of the unions—pure selfishness on both sides! The one has begot the other, and the general public is exploited all the time!

"I am glad to say there are splendid exceptions, but only so, and what is the exception should be the rule, of course.

"Glastonbury.

"H. R. KELWAY."

From a Miner

"DEAR SIR.—In reply to your invitation to miners for their opinions, I not only think there is wanted a Welsh revival but a world-wide revival, and not a man-made one either, but one sent from God who is the Author of all true revivals. If a revival came to Wales it would unite all those who were affected thereby, both employer and employee, in one common brotherhood; neither party would want to do the other party down, but instead would desire for everyone to have fair play. It would enable both parties to see that they were essential to each other and that neither party could do without the other, thus they would work more in fellowship and harmony with each other instead of being antagonistic as at present.

"Abertillery, Mon.

"JOHN THOMAS."

A Deep-seated Disease

"DEAR MR. EDITOR.—I am irresistibly forced to the conclusion that your Special Commissioner is right. Without hesitation I endorse fully the main contention of his article: that the paramount need of the time, not only in Wales but throughout the land, is a spiritual quickening, and that any consideration of the problem at issue can only be justly treated by a frank acceptance of the basic fact that the prevailing conditions are the result of causes not economic but are related to moral and spiritual values.

"A desperate condition of things requires

drastic remedy. As one who has travelled throughout the country and observed conditions, my convictions are strengthened day by day. Self-interest, the craze for pleasure and amusement, the fever to accumulate wealth, and the utter disregard of all the deeper issues of life, these are the symptoms of a deep-seated disease. Men and women are seeking colour, not light; sensational existence, not life. The bulk of humanity is living on the froth of life.

"If Christianity means anything at all, it means that Christ brings life to men. He is the great magnet to which all filings are drawn. It means the permeation of society by the spirit of Christ; the subordination and subjection of the self to the interests of the whole.

"Glasgow.

"TOM HASLAM."

Ministers Afraid to Speak

"DEAR MR. EDITOR.—Undoubtedly a Welsh revival would do much to improve the state of affairs in Wales. I have talked much with ministers and miners, and feel that a revival would give the ministers the freedom of speech they long for. At present they cannot speak out and say what they want to say—instead, they have to give voice to what they know their congregation likes! The ministers are afraid of offending their congregation in case they lose their monetary support!

"This sounds rather a sweeping statement, but it is perfectly true!

"A revival would lessen somewhat the present tension, and divert thoughts into a different channel.

"But there are other factors quite as urgently needed as a revival. Already the miners' interest and pleasure outside his work almost entirely centres round his chapel. Other things are needed. We all know they need better homes, but I think the crying need is for more light and more colour in their homes and surroundings, for colours have an enormous influence upon our everyday lives. Miners have to do their work in darkness, and how depressing it must surely be to be surrounded by things entirely black!

"Why has the miner in South Wales got such a bad name? The hot heads are responsible for this!

"The average miner is kind, generous and impulsive. He will lose a 'shift' in order to fetch a doctor if a neighbour's child is taken ill. When they kill their pig they bring a present of faggots or pig-meat, and if garden crops fail they insist upon acceptance of vegetables. There is more neighbourliness and kindness among them than in a great many English villages.

"(This is an English family experience after five years' residence in South Wales.)

"There are extremists, of course, and these are chiefly the irresponsible or younger generation.

"The miner has many dormant possibilities for good, and the overcoming of the present discontent lies in the awakening of his very many attributes.

"Pontardawe.

"F. SHEWKING."

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Start your cure at once

All chemists and stores, also Boots', Harrods', Selfridge's, Whiteley's, Lewis and Burrows', Taylor's Drug Co., Park's and Timothy White's supply Antexema at 1/3 and 3/- per bottle, or direct, post free, in plain wrapper, 1/6 and 3/- from Antexema, Castle Laboratory, London, N.W.1. Also throughout India, Australasia, Canada, Africa and Europe.



"Is Christmas a Fraud?"—Results of the September Competitions

ON page 109 of the present issue our readers will have read an article entitled "Christmas Fallacies," in which the author pronounces very plainly that to a large extent Christmas is a delusion, that the hundred-and-one ideas which we foster and cherish for a whole twelve-month, redeemable only upon the festive occasion, have but a disappointingly small value, if any at all, when that great day arrives.

Readers, of course, may not altogether agree with the author's sweeping deductions, but in any event it would be interesting to hear exactly what they have to say upon the subject, "Is Christmas a Fraud?" For the best letter received a prize of One Guinea will be awarded.

Rules for Competitors

1. All work must be original, and must be certified as such by the competitor. In the case of literary competitions work must be written on one side of the paper only.

2. Competitor's name, age, and address must be clearly written upon each entry—not enclosed on a separate sheet of paper. All loose pages must be pinned together.

3. Pseudonyms are not allowed, and not more than one entry may be submitted by one competitor for each competition.

4. No entry can be returned unless accompanied by a fully stamped and directed envelope large enough to contain it. Brown paper and string, wrappers, and stamps unaccompanied by envelope are insufficient.

5. All entries for the literary competition must be received at this office by December 23, 1920. They should be addressed "Competition Editor," *The Quiver, La Belle Sauvage, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.*

Results of the September Competitions

Literary

"MY IDEAL MAGAZINE"

The prize in the senior section is awarded to Miss J. M. B. Ross for the following :

An "Ideal Magazine" is a stiffer proposition than it sounds, for a magazine, crowded with all the articles one admires most in the various magazines which make a speciality of them, might have a result of such extreme incongruity as to be utterly unattractive when thus compiled.

As it is we know where to get exactly what we want—fiction, pictorial news, society notes, science, the arts—for magazines mostly pander to one particular taste, and this is wiser from a personal point of view than any "ideal" magazine could really be. Yet, by dint of patience and perseverance, an ideal magazine might at last be evolved by making a choice of those things which were found most acceptable to the great reading public. The result might be "ideal" to a vast majority of people.

To begin with, no one is indifferent to the cover of a magazine. Like a beautiful frame, it attracts many purchasers who otherwise might pass it by. And the human face is preferable to landscape. It touches the personal note (a vital factor in human life). Hence my dream magazine would have a beautiful and attractive cover.

Fiction, and fiction of the best, would be the staple food. To most people magazines are a luxury to be indulged in as a tonic and rest from the daily stress of life; and stories—of however ordinary and commonplace people—take us "out of ourselves" and teach us to realize that life is a relative thing and that human experiences are common to all, no one being immune from the worries and fret of our own daily life. We are soothed by a subtle sympathy of common experience.

As the psychologist knows, the eye is one of

THE QUIVER

the greatest factors in stimulating interest in any subject, and, did I edit a magazine, that periodical would be well interspersed with pictures of well-known people who have "done" something—in the best sense of the word. Their achievements would be well told and accompanied by a photograph of the doers. When we see a picture we instinctively want to know all about it. The information by itself is of much less value from the point of view of interest, and while I would never descend to gossip, paragraphs about prominent people would come under this department. The penny pictorial papers have proved the value of thus arresting and interesting the eye. A high tone would above all prevail throughout. The magazines we order and present to our friends are never those of an "advanced" type—if we can call a lower tone "advancement."

The great questions of the day would be discussed and presented from every point of view. This is of incalculable value, for, while the Man in the Street of to-day is well educated, too often are things presented to him from one point of view only, whereas he is intelligent enough to appreciate the other side if it is pointed out to him in honest and straightforward fashion. And all good magazines and newspapers should instruct as well as please.

The deeper side of life, too, would be catered for, not by what has been aptly, if crudely, termed as "pie-jaw," but by what is helpful for the deeper issues of life. Men and women alike would be attracted by my efforts. A gardening or sports section, information about needlework, cookery or other domestic arts, would meet the needs and tastes of all alike. And last, but not least, competitions of all kinds would lend an interest to my new periodical which they only can achieve. Who does not feel the charm of one's name—almost one's very personality—in print? And then the Paper Controller would remind me that paper was rationed, and—worse still!—that paper was dear; and so, with many regrets for much left out, my magazine would be launched—as "ideal" as the restrictions of modern conditions allow.

J. M. B. Ross.

HIGHLY COMMENDED.—M. V. Tufnell, W. J. Bakhurst, Mary D. Burnie, Catherine Agnes Park, Daisy Pepper, Mrs. E. Swindale, Grace Brown, Gwendolen Leijonhufvud, C. Whitehead.

COMMENDED.—M. Luckham, Freda Isobel Noble, Mary White, Molly Broderick, Phæbe L. Hart, L. E. Bartlett, Lilian D. Milner, Helen Slater, May S. M. Park, Gladys E. M. Lincoln, Muriel Collins, Girle Budd.

In the junior division the prize is awarded to **LILIAN BEDFORD**.

The following readers are highly commended for the work they sent in:

Hazell Organ, Margaret Bourne, Grace Hazel, Edith Dite, Marjorie May Smith, Janet Dougall, Arthur Clifford Norman, May Ballantyne, Kathleen Mary Smith.

COMMENDED.—G. Jane Roberts, Nan Thomson, Kathleen Page, May Davies, Richard G. Wall, Enid Felix, Dorothy Kuhruber, Winifred Breton.

Art Competition

"ILLUSTRATION TO AN ADVERTISEMENT"

Much interest was displayed in carrying out the subject of our art competition, the only regrettable fact being that certain readers' work had to be disqualified as they apparently did not understand that the illustration was to be of an original nature and not a mere repetition of what already appeared in our advertisement pages.

The senior prize is awarded to **F. MARION PARKER**.

The following readers are highly commended for the work sent in:

Beryl M. Puzey, Dorothy Rowe, B. R. Craig, Kathleen Ida Noble, Vera Watson, Thomas Reginald Harper.

COMMENDED.—Miss E. A. Bridger, Doris Oates, K. M. Fryer, Betty M. Hunt, Ethel M. Cresc Green, Irene Barrett, Molly Harrison, Dolly Scouloudi, Iris E. Hall.

In the junior division the prize is awarded to **JOAN McDouall**, aged 15, for a dainty illustration of Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen.

HIGHLY COMMENDED.—John A. D. Johnston, Ella R. Noble, Freda Rosina Crocker, Bessie D. Inglis, R. G. Zissell.

COMMENDED.—Janet Dougall, Margaret Smail, Meg Hemingway, Edith Day, Margaret Billing, Teresa Noble, Hope Doreen Parker, Edith K. Wolstenholme, Grace Thompson, Jeannette Fanshawe, Kathleen M. Grant, William Vickers, Kathleen Ralphs, Margery E. Widger, R. E. Jordan, Lyndall Bradbury, Frances Annie Harrison, Alice Huckle.



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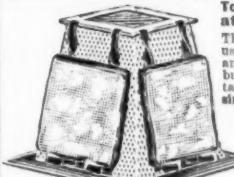


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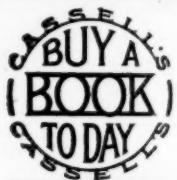
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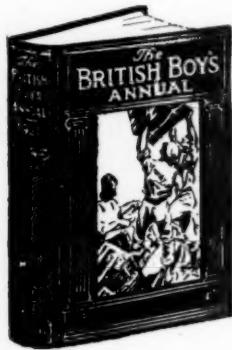
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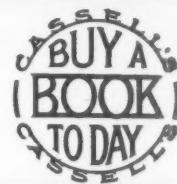
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